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CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK	465	HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT. By C. M. Yonge	467
THE FUTURE OF LIBERALISM AND LABOUR. II.—THE		FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA. By Omicron	469
LIMITATIONS OF THE LABOUR PARTY	458	ON THE LAKE. Poem by V. Sackville-West	469
THE NEW FREE TRADE MOVEMENT IN EUROPE. By		THE WORLD OF BOOKS:—	
F. J. Shaw	459	The Overbury Mystery. By Leonard Woolf	470
AT ST. STEPHEN'S. THE END. By Our Parliamentary		REVIEWS:—	
Correspondent	460	The Serajevo Murder. By G. Lowes Dickinson	471
LIFE AND POLITICS. By Kappa	462	Horse-Hoofs	472
LETTERS FROM A COUNTRY TEACHER.—I.	463	Ice and Airplanes	472
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: The Pre-Raphaelites (A. Ran-		A. C. B.	473
dall Wells); "The New Spirit in the European		Spiritual Values in Adult Education. By Albert	
Theatre" (Huntly Carter); "The Chapbook" (Harold		Mansbridge	473
Monro); "McG." (W. McG. Eagar); Abraham		Miss Sitwell Again. By Gilbert Thomas	474
Lincoln (L. K.)	464	Literary Satire	474
THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS. By Mary MacCarthy	465	Prinny	474
NOTES ON LAW AND ORDER. V.—THE NEED FOR HUMOUR.		ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE	476
By J. A. Hobson	466	BOOKS IN BRIEF	476
		FINANCIAL SECTION:—	
		The Week in the City	478

All communications (accompanied by a stamped envelope for return) should be addressed to the Editor, THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, 38, Great James Street, W.C.1.

EVENTS OF THE WEEK

ON Monday evening the House of Commons approved the acceptance of the Iraq Boundary Award by 239 votes to 4. These figures do not, however, give an accurate measure of the political influence of Lord Beaverbrook. In the first place, the Labour Party walked out of the House and took no part in the debate or the division. In the second place, the uneasiness which has been aroused as to our commitments in Iraq was reflected, not only in the speeches of Liberal and Conservative critics, but also in the guarded statement of Cabinet policy which was read out by Mr. Baldwin. As the formula accepted presumably by Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Amery's other Cabinet critics, this statement is both interesting and important. "The undertaking we have given," it declares, "is not for a definite twenty-five years, but . . ." until Iraq is admitted to the League. "It is not an undertaking to spend money on, or to keep troops in, Iraq either for the maintenance of internal order or for its defence against external aggression, but to continue our co-operation and advice in maintaining a stable system of government. . . . Our responsibility in any future situation must necessarily depend on the circumstances of that situation."

We do not believe that any formula could free us from a moral obligation to take the lead in the defence of a kingdom which we have created and for which we have accepted a mandate from the League, but it is important to affirm that the responsibility for Iraq's defence is shared by the whole League, and that the other nations cannot wash their hands of the matter. For the rest, Mr. Baldwin made a fair case for the acceptance of the League's award, with its condition of an extended mandate, on the ground of previous commitments. For those commitments the Labour Government had its share of responsibility, and it was futile and undignified of the Labour Party to absent itself from the House. Whether this is the first attempt at the "ginger" tactics agreed upon last week, or merely an isolated incident is not yet clear, but time will show. Meanwhile, however, the Left Wing have been heavily defeated in the

election of the Labour Party Executive; Mr. Lansbury, who headed the poll last year, being tenth on the list, while Mr. Wheatley, Colonel Wedgwood, and Mr. Maxton are replaced by men like Mr. Shaw, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Adamson.

The handling of the Mosul and Greco-Bulgarian disputes reminds us how largely the strength of the League of Nations depends on the inclusion of the smaller States. The admirable Mosul Report was the work of a Swede, a Hungarian, and a Belgian; an Estonian General was chosen to investigate the Turkish deportations; two Swedish officers will represent the League on the Macedonian frontier. It is an immense advantage, in many instances, that facts should be investigated, and recommendations made, by men who can stand wholly aside from the tangled politics of the Great Powers. The presence of the Great Powers on the Council—which gave the final decision in each of these disputes—ensures a sufficient regard to political realities; but the distinctive "League atmosphere," so intangible, yet so real to all who have seen Geneva at work, could never have been created in an assembly representing the Great Powers alone. It is a great thing that the League and the International Court should have given men like Dr. Nansen and Dr. Löderer the opportunity to play a part worthy of their character and abilities. It is a still greater thing that the presence of representatives of the smaller States in the League and on the Court should remind us continually that neither a nation's rights nor its contribution to human progress can be measured by its area, or its military strength.

An offer by the textile manufacturers of Northern France to pledge their industry as a security for a large foreign loan has been excitedly boomed in the Paris Press, and the franc underwent a short-lived recovery on the strength of it. It is, we fear, a case of clutching at straws. In the first place, the offer of the textile manufacturers is not a concrete plan, but only the vague indication of a general idea, which it would take a long time to translate into a practicable form. In the second

place, a mortgage on the industry of a foreign country is far from being a gilt-edged security, and it is most unlikely that it would enable a sum of the order indicated, namely, 10 milliard francs, or, say, £80 millions, to be raised abroad on moderate terms. Thirdly, the largest foreign loan is no substitute for a balanced Budget. Its only contribution is to ensure a breathing-space of exchange-stability, while the essential work of balancing the Budget is being done. Finally, there is no need whatever for France to have recourse to so cumbrous and dubious an expedient in order to secure a breathing-space. With a gold reserve amounting to double this hypothetical foreign loan, she has only to use half of it to secure exactly the same result, while escaping all interest charges into the bargain. It is, indeed, a striking example of the Continental banker's reluctance to part with gold in any emergency whatever, that this proposal should be seriously considered, while the huge gold stores of the Bank of France lie unused and unpledged.

* * *

Mr. Justice Feetham's letter to the Prime Minister, which was published at the end of last week, is an extremely interesting document. It tells the British public nearly all that it wants to know about the suppressed Award of the Irish Boundary Commission. To Irishmen living near the border the important question is, no doubt, the exact line drawn by the Commissioners, and that they are never to know unless some malicious person procures the draft Award for the *MORNING POST*. But to the ordinary Englishman or Scotsman, the principles which guided the Commission and the interpretation which it placed upon Article XII. of the Irish Treaty are the main points that matter, and these are fully expounded in Mr. Justice Feetham's letter. It is obvious indeed that the letter contains the substance of the Commission's Report, as distinct from its Award, and that it has been published by the Commissioners as the irreducible minimum necessary for their defence against misrepresentation.

* * *

Apart from any sense of wounded vanity at having, to superficial appearance, wasted many months in producing an abortive Award, there are ample grounds for the publication of Mr. Justice Feetham's letter. The way the matter was left by the three Governments gave a false impression of the Commission's work, and it was highly desirable to reassure the general public as to the ability and impartiality of this arbitral tribunal. We now know that the Commission took a highly sensible, as well as a judicial view of its function. The sophistries of both disputants were brushed aside; the interpretations placed upon Article XII., after signature, by some of those who negotiated the Treaty, were ignored. The Commission took the view that its business was to determine the boundary in the light of the wishes of the inhabitants, subject to an overriding necessity of maintaining Ulster as a working economic unit. It was this necessity, and not any concession to the contention that only minor rectifications were intended, which induced the Commission to make an Award unpalatable to the Free State Government. The present settlement is, indeed, the fruit of the Commissioners' balanced judgment, for if either party had secured a substantial victory for its point of view, it would have insisted upon its promulgation. Incidentally, we are told that "speculative and misleading statements" have been current as to the Award, so we may take it that the *MORNING POST* forecast was not accurate, though it may still be presumed that no large transfers of territory were contemplated.

The policy respecting educational grants outlined in Circular 1,371 is to be postponed for a year, and meanwhile conferences are to take place between the Local Education Authorities and the Board. That is the outcome of the fierce controversy which the ill-judged circular aroused. It is clearly the right outcome. There may be something to be said for block grants, but there can be no excuse for springing such a change suddenly upon those responsible for national education, and it is manifestly impracticable to base a more rigid system on a lean year without even giving the Local Authorities time to adjust their programmes. The breathing-space which has now been secured must be used for a less excited and more thorough investigation of the points at issue. It is the unfortunate fate of education policy to alternate between periods of hectic controversy and periods of neglect. Perhaps Circular 1,371 will in the long run have done good by attracting attention to urgent problems and bringing the schools back into politics as a live issue. It is something, at any rate, to have had an educational dispute which was not theological.

* * *

It was generally taken for granted that the American Senate would carry on the debate upon the entry of the United States into the World Court in the customary fashion, and without any particular complications. But since the discussion began, a week ago, Mr. Coolidge's opponents, most of whom are on the Republican side, have been indulging themselves to the full in framing reservations, in addition to those approved by the President, for the indirect killing of the resolution. As it happens, however, the question of the World Court has been thrown into the shade by the unexpected activity of the White House in the matter of Disarmament, following upon the invitation from the League of Nations for American participation in the discussion of the forthcoming Conference. Mr. Coolidge, in his annual Message, had used language plainly implying that the United States could have no part in a European conference on land armaments. This week he has been in private consultation with Colonel House, and inevitably the American Press is in excited pursuit of motives and intentions. The President's tactics, however, are simple and inevitable. For him to accept the invitation to Geneva on his own account would be rash. He has passed the decision on to the Senate.

* * *

While the Viceroy closes the year with a review of the Indian outlook more generally hopeful than we have had since the War, the Indian political parties are struggling with a clotted mass of sectional quarrels. The Indian National Congress begins its annual session at Cawnpore to-day, and we should judge that there are few among the delegates who hope to get through without a sharp renewal of strife. The days of Mr. Gandhi's dominance are over. The condition of the Swarajist party has been pitiful since the death of the Bengali leader, C. R. Das, six months ago. Its nominal leader, Mr. Motilal Nehru, is advocating an intransigent policy for which there is little support, and certainly no enthusiasm, while one prominent Swarajist after another has been breaking away and declaring for the abandonment of the Nehru wrecking tactics and the adoption of a constitutional policy. Needless to say, the evidence of widespread economic recovery summarized by Lord Reading makes poor material for the Swarajist die-hards.

* * *

The issue of the fighting in China remains uncertain; but the Japanese Government has become sufficiently alarmed to fill up the complement of Japanese

troops in Manchuria, which had been depleted by the discharge of time-expired conscripts, and has announced its intention to check fighting within a six-mile radius of the railway zone. There is nothing in this inconsistent with Viscount Kato's assurance that Japan has no intention of interfering in the strife between the rival Tutchuns. The special interests of Japan in Manchuria have always been acknowledged, and involve corresponding responsibilities. It is not merely a question of protecting the interests of concessionaires. Not only the Fusan coal-mines but thousands of Japanese and Korean farmers depend on the working of the South Manchurian Railway, which runs from Dairen to Toanan-fu—a distance of some six hundred miles—with a branch line from Mukden to Ping-Yang, connecting it with the Korean system. The Chinese Civil Governor at Mukden is still exercising his full powers in the administration of the general affairs of the city and province, and there is no reason to doubt the Japanese declaration that they have no intention of intervening to prevent a transfer of authority from one Chinese official to another. In taking steps to keep the railway open for civil traffic, they are clearly within their rights.

* * *

The surrender of Jeddah and the abdication of King Ali now bring the Wahabi empire to the shores of the Red Sea. It is a little surprising that the Arab population of the Hedjaz should have made so little opposition to the overthrow of a family closely connected with the religious traditions of the holy cities. We may safely conclude that the Hashimite dynasty had made itself extremely unpopular, and it looks as if the Allies, and more particularly Great Britain, had displayed little judgment in placing them on the throne. There is, at present, nothing to show whether the Wahabi Sultan will annex the Hedjaz or convert it into an emirate, with one of his own nominees at the head of affairs. Great Britain, at any rate, has no further concern in the matter than to see that whoever rules in the Hedjaz shall protect Indians who make the pilgrimage against wrongful exactions, and shall enforce elementary hygiene at the pilgrim ports. As one of the Wahabi Sultan's chief grievances against Hussein was the improper treatment of *bona-fide* pilgrims, there ought to be no difficulty on the first score; the second may tax more severely his powers of administration.

* * *

The reports of peace negotiations between M. de Jouvenel and the Syrian leaders are not very definite or reliable; but there is no doubt that the new High Commissioner is making a conscientious attempt to bury the past and start afresh. His task is not an easy one, and until he gets into touch with the Druse chieftains, he can hardly be said to have made any real progress; for the Lebanese chiefs will hardly dare to make open peace with the French unless they are absolutely guaranteed against Druse retaliation. The Sultan el Atrash has a chance of making reasonable terms which it may be hoped he will accept; but a Syrian mountain chief with a grievance is not always far-sighted, and the Druse grievances have been very real. The news from Morocco is more definite, in that there seems no doubt that Abd-el-Krim has sent Captain Gordon Canning to Paris to open negotiations. The terms he is instructed to ask are more a matter of rumour, but if they form even a possible basis for bargaining the French Government would be very ill-advised to miss the opportunity. Spain, however, is a necessary party to the negotiations, and it seems unfortunate that Abd-el-Krim should give the appearance of ignoring her by entering into conversations with France alone.

Reza Khan Pahlevi now sits on the throne of Persia, apparently with the full consent and approval of the Persian representative assemblies. As we have already pointed out, Eastern history is full of records of men who have risen to great eminence from obscure positions; but this is certainly an extreme instance. The self-made men of the Arab and Moorish caliphates rarely rose above the rank of grand vizier or high chamberlain; the founders of new dynasties generally began their careers as acknowledged chieftains of some tribe or confraternity. Reza Khan began life as a trooper in a regiment of Persian Cossacks. The new Shah has done many things which would be considered harsh and tyrannical if judged by Western standards, but no one questions his ability or patriotism, and he has filled the difficult post of chief minister to an absentee monarch with great self-restraint and prudence. He is no bad man to have at the head of affairs in a country where hunting and hawking, tea-drinking and dicing, arouse more interest than matters of State.

* * *

It is time that the Ministry of Health adopted a more liberal attitude regarding the distribution of information on the methods of birth control. The desire and the need for such information are clearly shown in the annual report of the Society for the Provision of Birth Control Clinics which was recently issued. The first centre established by this Society is at Walworth, in one of the most densely populated industrial quarters of South London. This Clinic was started in 1921, and in its first year of work attracted only a few hundred patients. Last year, as many as 4,742 attendances by women seeking advice during the six hours a week when the Clinic was open were recorded. The same Society is now responsible for Clinics in Kensington, Cambridge, and Wolverhampton; and in London alone there are at least four other Clinics under different auspices. Nevertheless, the demand for advice on these matters far exceeds the available supply, and there is a growing sense that it should be distributed through the efficient channels of the maternity and child welfare centres. Apparently one of the latest adherents to this view is Mr. Lloyd George, whose name appears in a list of Members of Parliament published by the Workers' Birth Control Group which favours that development.

* * *

The decision of the L.C.C. that there is no prospect of successfully underpinning Waterloo Bridge will be received with deep regret. The majority in favour of building a new bridge with six lines for vehicular traffic was unexpectedly large. Most of the Municipal Reform Party, wearied of the time and money already spent on obtaining expert advice, voted for Mr. Gatti's motion, in the interest of economy. It seemed that underpinning was a gamble, and that no real confidence could be placed on its practicability until it had been tried. Others did not see why the Office of Works should be brought in to decide a matter upon which the Council had enough material to make up its own mind. While all that Mr. Morrison and the Labour Party seemed to care about was that a bridge large enough to take tramway lines to South London should be erected. It certainly seems that those who were anxious to save a monument of great architectural beauty, were given full opportunity of expressing their views, and failed in the course of twelve months to put up a convincing case that the bridge could be saved. It now remains to be seen whether the L.C.C. can build the new bridge without applying to Parliament for powers. If they are forced to take the matter to Parliament, then the battle of Waterloo Bridge may be fought over again.

THE FUTURE OF LIBERALISM AND LABOUR

II.—THE LIMITATIONS OF THE LABOUR PARTY

TO most Liberals the doctrine which we argued at length last week, namely, that the two-party system is essential to the satisfactory working of representative government, is peculiarly distasteful. If it is a serious evil that we have now three parties instead of two, the most obvious remedy is that one of them should disappear. And, if this is to happen, Liberalism, as the smallest party and the middle one, is clearly the predestined victim. It is only natural, therefore, that Liberals should rebel against an argument which seems to point towards so disagreeable a conclusion, that they should disparage the advantages of the two-party system, and profess to believe that it is not a bad thing that no party should have a majority in the House of Commons. It was in this spirit that Liberals struggled last year to obtain Proportional Representation, and, indeed, as P.R. would unquestionably ensure their future as an important party, it goes against the grain for any Liberal to oppose it. None the less, it is a mistake, we believe, to look for succour in this direction; for to do so is to run counter to that mysterious but real and formidable force, the political instinct of the British people. The great objection to P.R. is not its complexity or its practical difficulties, but the fact that it is the enemy of majority government and the two-party system. Obscurely, but profoundly, the British public and the House of Commons know that these things are far more important than representational exactitude; it is this feeling which explains the numerous tergiversations of politicians upon the issue and the blindness which often seems to have afflicted many as to where the interests of their party lay. British political instinct, we suspect, will always contrive somehow to defeat P.R. The same instinct would long since have made short work of the Liberal Party if that were really the easiest way back to the two-party system. It is because it is neither the easiest way, nor the best way, nor even a practicable way that the Liberal Party survives, and is likely to continue to survive. The rapidity with which the Labour Party has grown up leads many people to form an altogether false estimate of its future possibilities. It has taken it less than twenty-five years to win its present position as the second party in the State, capable, as we saw in 1923, of commanding nearly a third of the membership of the House of Commons. Apart from small occasional shocks, its rate of progress has been steadily maintained. Why then should it not continue to grow at the same rate until it wins a clear majority at, say, the election after next? A moment's reflection on the nature of the Labour Party will supply the answer. It is, first and foremost, the party of trade-unionism. It has grown hitherto, almost exclusively, by detaching trade-unionists from their allegiance to other parties and winning them for itself. Upon this task most of its efforts have been concentrated, and they have met with marked success. But the process is now almost complete. Labour already holds the vast majority of the predominantly industrial constituencies with a firmness of grip which is not likely to be relaxed. It has ousted Liberalism altogether from this field. Its progress has been somewhat slower in those industrial centres, like Birmingham and Liverpool, which were formerly Tory strongholds. Here it has still a number of seats to win; it will win them in all probability before very long. But when it has consolidated its position in the industrial areas and realized its full potential strength along the

lines on which it has grown up hitherto, it will still be a long way short of a Parliamentary majority. To secure a Parliamentary majority, Labour must not only win a hundred seats which it has never won as yet; most of them must be seats of a *type* which it has never won as yet, constituencies dominated not by the industrial workers but by other classes to which Labour hitherto has made practically no appeal.

The truth of this conclusion will be apparent to anyone who will take the trouble to study a list of British constituencies, and analyze the results of a few General elections were over 270 seats at the last election where either there were over 270 seats at the last election, where either there was no Labour candidate at all, or where the majority against Labour was over two to one. There were scores of other seats where Tory candidates defeated Labour in straight fights by majorities which, though less than two to one, were overwhelming. It is impossible to construct any Parliamentary majority for the Left, which represents even a plausible hypothesis, without including rural constituencies, like those in Scotland, Wales, and the West Country, or essentially residential or business centres, which have often enough voted Liberal in the past, but which it is almost grotesque to imagine voting Labour. People sometimes, either in hope or terror, indulge visionary fancies by arguing that Labour makes a very strong appeal to the "working-classes," and that the working-classes are in a large majority. But the organized industrial workers are *not* in a majority, and Labour has still to show its capacity to make any appreciable headway outside their ranks.

But why should it not do so? Why should it not rally agricultural labourers, shop-assistants, teachers, and even clerks as it has rallied the urban artisans? The suggestion is certainly not absurd. But the task is likely, we think, to prove very difficult. For here we must reckon with all the implications of the association of the Labour Party with trade-unionism. That association has been its great asset with the industrial workers. It is not the propaganda of Socialism that has induced the miners or the railwaymen or the factory operatives to vote Labour with so high a degree of solidarity; it is the appeal made to their trade-union loyalty. Labour is *their* party, and they vote for its candidates, whatever their private opinions, in much the same spirit as they obey their union in time of strike. With trade-unionism lying ready to hand as an organized force, commanding the allegiance of millions of workers, the rapid growth of the Labour Party, with its unchallengeable trade-union credentials, is not really very remarkable after all. It has no such advantage in appealing to other classes to whom the traditions and psychology of trade-unionism are foreign. Even if it succeeds in making headway among them, its progress is bound to be far slower than it has been in the industrial areas. An independent majority for Labour will certainly not be an affair of the election after next.

But that is not all. The association of Labour with trade-unionism is not only not an advantage, it is a serious disadvantage to the party in its attempts to broaden its appeal. For trade-unionism is essentially a militant industrial force, pursuing sectional and sometimes anti-social aims, using belligerent methods, capable of endangering the safety of the State, and arousing the natural antagonism of those who stand to suffer. The Labour Party is never allowed to forget that its primary

duty is to act as the political wing of the industrial Labour movement. Whenever industrial trouble occurs, its leaders must assume the rôle of advocates. They must defend the courses of trade-unionism, however much these may conflict with their own avowed principles, and however injurious they may be to the community at large. And this not only tends to alienate other classes directly. It creates an impression of irresponsibility, an uneasy feeling that Labour is not to be trusted to act as a Government should in a grave emergency, that it might even be forced by the pressure of a bellicose industrial movement to use its political power to sabotage the State.

For these reasons, we find it very difficult to see how the Labour Party, constituted as it now is, can ever win a Parliamentary majority in Britain. The death of the Liberal Party would thus not serve to restore the old two-party system. For the two-party system meant not only that there were two parties, but that each of them was accustomed in succession to shoulder the responsibilities of power. As things are now, it seems probable that we have before us a fairly prolonged period of Conservative rule. Deplorable as this may be, it will not be in the least disastrous, if it is not too prolonged. But no prospect could be more forbidding or more dangerous than that we should settle down to Tory dominance as an established thing. The creation of a practicable alternative instrument of government is our most vital public need to-day. By itself the Labour Party cannot supply this need. Neither can the Liberal Party by itself. Can the two parties, despite their profound mutual jealousies, accentuated by the unhappy experience of 1924, co-operate to supply it? Or must both parties go into the melting-pot before any such development is possible? We shall leave these questions for next week, observing now that the need which we have described above is a compelling one, and that the statesmanship of those who lead the Opposition parties will be mainly judged by whether they help to satisfy it or to thwart it.

THE NEW FREE TRADE MOVEMENT IN EUROPE

By F. J. SHAW

(Secretary of the Cobden Club and of the International Committee to Promote Universal Free Trade).

THE food tariffs of Europe, both in belligerent and neutral countries, collapsed during the war, yet there are more tariff barriers on the Continent than in 1914. Everywhere the Protectionist spirit, fostered by national jealousies, seems triumphant, and has even made serious inroads in Free Trade Britain and Holland.

However, there is another aspect of the matter. Before the war the almost universal attitude of business men and others, outside purely academic circles, towards Protection was one, if not of approval, at least of acquiescence. The tariffs were established things and seemed immovable, and though oppressive, were bearable. Thus, though there were riots in Austria and elsewhere against the "hunger taxes," and the Socialist parties of the Continent demanded the abolition of all indirect taxes, there was practically no Free Trade agitation in Europe, except that carried on since 1911 by the "Ligue du Libre Echange" in France.

This spirit is passing now, however. The aggravated Protection enforced during the war by the blockade and the submarines, followed by the embargoes and tariffs imposed by the Austrian Succession States,

have not been without their effect. Free Trade, at least in Central Europe, is no longer only an academic idea. On the contrary, there are thousands of business men throughout the distressed Continent who find their customary markets closed to them, and are eagerly demanding the breakdown of the tariffs which are rendering trade impossible. The way is prepared for a Continental Cobden, for a Continental Free Trade League.

The first indication of this new feeling came to me shortly after the war closed, when demands were made on the Cobden Club from Switzerland, Holland, and Austria, almost simultaneously, to take the lead in forming a new international movement for Free Trade. This was in itself a significant thing. Before the war two International Free Trade Congresses had been held and a third projected, but the initiative for these had come from this country; the Continent itself had responded through its University professors, but had followed, not led the movement. Now the parts were reversed; it was Europe that led and the Club that responded.

It was impossible to do anything in 1919, but in the following year an interim Free Trade Conference was summoned by the Club and held in the Caxton Hall, when the whole matter was discussed at a special meeting. This meeting invited the Club to prepare a scheme for a permanent International League, and to present this to the Third International Free Trade Congress, which was fixed to be held in Holland. The Club was to have the assistance of any foreign Free Traders who could visit London and attend the meetings of its Committee, and to do what it could to persuade the Free Traders of countries in which no organization then existed to combine. At that time there were only two definitely Free Trade bodies on the Continent, the "Ligue du Libre Echange" in France, and the "Vereeniging Het Vrije Ruilverkeer" in Holland. The task proved unexpectedly easy. In rapid succession Free Trade organizations have sprung up in Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, and Canada, and have become affiliated to the International Committee.

The Third International Free Trade Congress in the regular series was held in Amsterdam in September, 1921. At this Congress a scheme for an international organization was unanimously adopted. An International Committee to Promote Universal Free Trade was formed, and it was determined that the officers of the Cobden Club for the time being should form the executive body, the Committee meeting from time to time in various leading cities. Thus, for the first time in history, the International Free Trade movement has a responsible leadership and an organization capable of expansion with the growth of opinion throughout the world.

At present the movement is interesting chiefly as a symptom. Of course, it is yet only in its infancy, but it is the outcome of the vast permanent changes which the war has brought about in Europe. We cannot restore the past, neither can we prevent widespread political and economic changes from gradually moulding a changed mentality among the peoples. Thus the causes that have already converted so many to Free Trade will certainly continue to operate, and may be relied upon to carry on their own convincing propaganda. The aim of the active Free Traders on the Continent is to supplement this propaganda of circumstances by making clear the causes of the evils from

which they suffer, together with the only way of escape. Naturally, the centre of discontent is in the Austrian Succession States. However unsuited for political unity, owing to diversities of race and creed, the people of the Hapsburg Empire may have been, the valleys of the Danube and its tributaries are essentially an economic unit. By bitter experience this fact is being driven home to the consciousness of the hostile peoples within it. To my mind, there was a marked difference between the attitude of the Hungarian representatives at the International Conference at Vienna last September and that of the same people at Budapest at that of 1922. At Budapest, Count Apponyi emphasized, both in conversation and on the platform, the essential economic unity of the basins of the Theiss and the Danube, and seemed to take for granted that this implied the equal necessity for political unity. The restoration to Hungary of its lost provinces, the political leadership of Budapest, and, presumably, the return of Magyar domination were clearly implied. That Count Apponyi in this had, then, the full support of most, if not all, of the Hungarian Free Traders, seemed evident from many conversations I had with them. Their belief in Free Trade was sincere and ardent, but it was strangely blended with an equal enthusiasm for Magyar expansion. At Vienna this year the economic question alone came to the front, and, by the Hungarians as well as by the other Central Europeans, all argument was directed towards the breakdown of the tariffs and other impediments which keep the nations asunder. "Unless," said Francesco Nitti, in a letter addressed to the Conference, "there is a reconstruction of Europe into a living economic unit, we are heading for a period of progressive decadence," and his words might serve as a summary of what was said by all the speakers who followed.

For, just as the imperative necessity for union, economic as well as political, compelled the newly liberated thirteen colonies, in spite of their many differences, to found the federal United States, so, it is coming to be recognized, Central Europe from the Rhine to the Black Sea must become, at least economically, a federal unit. The relative importance of the two things, political and economic federation, is indeed reversed. To the thirteen colonies political federation, as a security against possible European aggression, was the most important consideration; economic federation was less necessary, and harder to achieve. In Europe economic unity is a vital necessity, and with the growing recognition of this fact should ere long be easy of attainment; political unity, except of the loosest kind such as is involved in the League of Nations for the purpose of securing peace, is not needed, and is probably impossible.

In conclusion, it seems to me that a movement, having a strong backing in popular feeling and need, has arisen for the abolition of tariffs at least throughout that part of Europe which is bound together economically by the great navigation of the Rhine, Danube, and Vistula and their connecting canals, as well as by the trunk railway lines from the German Ocean to the Black Sea. Russia, Spain, Scandinavia, and to some extent France and Italy are, of course, less closely connected, and may very possibly keep aloof. But, as it is the force of circumstances and not academic theory that has created the movement so far as it has gone, so the same necessity will ultimately, and probably before very long, make it successful. Even if that is the sole result, it will be an immense gain to civilization, though the immediate pressure that has produced the movement

would be largely removed. Nevertheless, I think the economic unity, very real, though not so intimate, of the rest of Europe and of the world would then be more widely recognized, and the aim of the Amsterdam Congress in founding the International Committee to Promote Universal Free Trade would be much nearer realization.

AT ST. STEPHEN'S THE END

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21ST, 1925.

"IS it the view of the Prime Minister?" asked Mr. Thurtle in a supplementary question, "that the present system of land tenure in this country is satisfactory?"

"I do not think," was Mr. Baldwin's comprehensive and unexpected reply, "that anything in this country is satisfactory."

That undoubtedly expresses the feeling of many who have listened to or participated in these two months of gloomy debate, which have expired almost as much from inanition and boredom as by death from prorogation. There has been no energy, no heart, no fire; perplexity and confusion in all parties, each reft with internal dissension; revelations of grievances and misfortunes, without finding a remedy; and the absence of the exhibition of any new talent giving promise of political genius. The last-named may be largely due to the new system of three front benches, twice vocal in every important debate, with speeches of something like an hour long. This does not matter to the Liberal Party, because only some ten of its members appear in the House with any regularity, and only some five take active part in the debate. But the secret of the "revolt of Labour" is less due, I think, to a desire for throwing things about and scenes of violence than to the fact that they have a long line of elderly and more or less extinct volcanoes on their front bench who contribute torpid orations, often of disastrous verbosity. This crowds into the dinner hour whatever is of life or fire from the benches behind. So that the "Mountain," whose centre is Glasgow, and whose vociferations practically dominated Parliament a year and a half ago, has fallen into almost complete silence, its few members who attend only gibbering in wrathful phraseology to a company of twenty or thirty more or less languid members, who gaze at them without a stimulation, a smile, or a sneer.

As for the Tory four hundred, the thoughts of most of them can be easily conceived. Many have fled from the stricken scene; others wander uneasily into the Chamber to hear perhaps Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister wallowing among schedule definitions of weird-sounding instruments classified as knives, or the ever-genial, ever-ready Sir Burton Chadwick responding to the almost pathetic appeals of Captain Benn with such devastating assertions as "that the blank about which the honourable member seems to be so obscure is the article which is the raw material." And on laughter—"or rather I must correct myself," and so on *ad lib*. Upon which they wander out again, only reappearing in divisions to carry a Bill, which the Government has brought its majority but not its intelligence to bear upon, without the alteration of a comma or a clause. A few, still nursing an unconquerable hope, and defiant of the official prohibition, rise time after time in response to the ardent en-

treaties of the Liberal five to expound the faith which is in them, and exhibit their capacities for eloquence. But alas! the majority of these sit for seven hours and depart sadly at the end, tormented by the mental constipation of undelivered speech. One of these unfortunates confided to me that on one day he had risen thirteen times in succession, and each in vain. They watch with envy Mr. Runciman, Captain Benn, Captain Garro-Jones, Major Crawford, Mr. Harris, or Mr. Trevelyan Thomson, and a few others, speaking on every amendment, exercising all their arts of reason, humour, taunts and jeers, and pitiless facts concerning Free Trade and Protection, replies to which are left to the two melancholy figures on the front bench or to such grotesques as Sir Henry Page Croft and Sir Frederick Hall. Lord Birkenhead has been endeavouring to brighten cricket in the House of Lords, evoking heavy humour from Lord Haldane concerning the Zoological Gardens and its suitable or possible denizens, and seemingly startling out of their accustomed coma the scanty occupants of the red benches. Everyone who suffered under the infinite boredom of Sir John Butcher in the House of Commons will rejoice in the branding of his "malignant imbecility" in his attempts to disturb the Irish Settlement in the "other place." But those who listen to the Commons debates with more than one halfpennyworth of sack in this intolerable deal of bread may be forgiven if they pray, "O for an hour of F. E. Smith!" Incidentally, the microphone, installed in the gilded chamber, has conveyed some remarkable *obiter dicta* from that vivacious orator to the Press Gallery, which have not provided astonishment for the journalists (for no journalists are ever astonished at anything), but which, if published, would certainly be astonishing to the world.

Where does the Government stand at the close of this enormous session? It was thought that in the new Parliament, with its gigantic Protectionist majority, strength would be shown by the Government, while irritation might break into open revolt against the Prime Minister. The facts have proved themselves to be precisely otherwise. A famous ecclesiastic told me in the 1923 election that it was never advisable to proclaim yourself honest and stupid, especially if it happened to be true. He completely misunderstood the temper of the English people, who have grown for the moment infinitely tired of the cleverness and dodginess of leaders drawn from the Celtic fringe. They hoped to have obtained an honest, stupid Englishman to govern England, and to a certain extent they have succeeded in their aspirations; although, politically, Mr. Baldwin is nothing like so stupid and nothing like so honest as they desire or deserve. In any case, I am sure, if it came to a contest, he could appeal alone against all the rabble of hyphenated knights and "third-class brains" out of which he has formed a Government, probably more weak and futile in debate than any since Disraeli had to form ephemeral administrations out of mediocrity in mid-Victorian times. His invariable courtesy and a certain attraction of manner disarm ill-temper. The deliberate or unconscious naïveté of his utterances provokes sympathy. His use of commonplace and familiar quotations and his telling of stories which everyone has heard before provoke a warm feeling of satisfaction. He is the darling of the House, and you feel that if he got himself into a hobble, Liberal and Labour would compete to get him out of it. Only Mr. Snowden, with his implacable austerity, denounced him for flagrant breaking of election pledges in the Safeguarding of Industries Bill; and the effect was like that of making an indecent joke in a drawing-room. On Friday, in the housing debate, he was overloaded with compliments from the incorruptible

David Kirkwood, because he was said to have said that the housing conditions in Glasgow were "damnable." And when, in his speech, he announced that while he knew nothing about brick houses, or iron houses, or alternative houses, or trades unions or schemes or quarrels, he had come to the conclusion after long thought that the best way to meet the scarcity of houses was to build more houses, all criticism and acerbity vanished in the discussion before so remarkable a discovery so bravely uttered.

But except for this personal popularity of the Prime Minister, the popularity of the Government has undoubtedly sagged in the House and in the country. If an election was held to-morrow, even without an arrangement between the two Oppositions not to cut each other's throats, the Tories would lose at least a hundred supporters. With any such arrangement they would probably come back in a minority. For the people are learning that "honesty" and "stupidity," though excellent virtues each of them in time of tranquillity, are incapable of reversing the continuous reduction of British exports, or permitting us to sell British coal abroad at anything except below its cost of production, or reducing the enormous subsidy (now mounting to tens of millions) created by that process, or grappling with the problem of the deserted countryside or the million living in overcrowded, insanitary homes, or the million and a half unemployed. I think the hope of the only man of talent on that bench has grown steadily less. Mr. Churchill makes no progress in the affections and allegiance of the Parliamentary party into which he has intruded. They approve his attacks upon his old friends, but they trust neither his judgment, conviction, nor loyalty to his new ones. They are outraged at his jesting about sacred things, such as the possibility of raising the income tax. They are profoundly disappointed at the unpopularity of his Budget, introduced with such rhetorical clatter, and now lying in complete ruin. And they are disgusted at the fact which he is proving by his speeches in the House, that he will never advocate a purely Protectionist policy. Being themselves a more solid party of Protectionists than this country has seen for a century, they know in their hearts that this refusal is due, not to any intellectual or moral condemnation (for he would advocate anything if he thought it could succeed), but to his judgment that in a clear-cut issue at an election, Protection can never win. But this knowledge does not add to his popularity.

The official Opposition have ceased to oppose, with the solitary exception of Mr. Snowden. They sit in long lines and gaze with rheumy eyes, while controversy which they cannot understand hurtles around or above them. Mr. Lloyd George has made one or two non-party speeches, which have been listened to with interest, and even with respect. He has been too much engaged in his land policy to conduct the day-by-day criticism of a Government. Having secured the consent of the Candidates' Association of two hundred members to his compromise, he has treated his thirty followers in the House with the utmost contempt and disdain, and their criticism as negligible. The majority of the critics are members of his own creation. "It is he that has made us," they have to confess, "and not we ourselves." Many only exist through Tory support, and are pledged to keep the Tory Government in power. And they do not appear or speak in the House, for this kind cometh not forth but by prayer and fasting. And Mr. Lloyd George's whirlwind Limehouse attacks on "plunderers and parasites" have rendered impossible any Tory support for them again.

And so to the end of the year of our Lord 1925, with the official assertion that nothing is satisfactory in England,

LIFE AND POLITICS

IF anything were needed to enhance the absurdity of the Labour Party's manœuvre in the Mosul debate, we should find it in the fact, which seems to be undeniable, that the withdrawal from the House was arranged with Mr. Clynes before Mr. MacDonald's departure for Ceylon. That seems foolish enough, while the deputy leader's announcement, during his afternoon discussion with the Prime Minister, that he would take the Party out when the Mosul motion came on, was a quite painful reminder of good Mr. Clynes's inability to learn the elements of parliamentary tactics. The incident is peculiarly damaging to the Labour Party at the moment, if only because the great majority of the British people want to see an alert Opposition whenever foreign affairs come on for discussion. In this case, also, there is a manifest need for continuous criticism. Mr. Baldwin's statement was exceedingly important, and much of its matter comes fresh to the country. Moreover, by February the Iraq question will probably be far advanced, and the Treaty, if completed, will be virtually beyond attack. Hence the throwing away of this week's opportunity for a general review was the most childish of deeds.

* * *

I do not recall any instance of a Cabinet Minister's being so sharply and generally rebuked for bad behaviour as Lord Birkenhead has been on account of his recent speeches in the Lords. The abuse of Lord Arnold was equally gross and silly, since Lord Arnold is known in both Houses as a man who combines an unusually large knowledge of business with a disarming manner. Mr. Baldwin's own courtesy to opponents is as unflinching as Lord Oxford's. Higher praise than that no admirer would ask for. The Prime Minister cannot permit a member of his team to display the manners of the race-gang. By the bye: the Tory paper which detests Lord Birkenhead most heartily makes a point of referring to him as Secretary of State for India. This frequent mention by an enemy in his own camp is, I think, the only reminder we have nowadays of a very important fact.

* * *

Long ago, as a very raw pressman, I was sent to interview Sir Hamo Thornycroft. It was soon after the Cromwell was installed ("down a sort of area," as a ribald M.P. said) outside Westminster Hall, thus furnishing Lord Rosebery with the occasion of the famous address which gave the phrase "a practical mystic" to current speech. Sir Hamo struck me then, and always, as the perfect Victorian sculptor: a companion in the arts—shall I say?—to Our only General, as they loved to call him, the then Sir Garnet Wolseley. It seems to me a pity that his two most conspicuous figures in London should be the Cromwell and the Gladstone in the Strand, both with ugly pedestals. The Gordon in Trafalgar Square is far more characteristic—of the sculptor, I mean. But no one could talk to him about his work without learning that the Artemis was the apple of his eye. It was done when he was thirty years old.

* * *

It would be difficult to name a more successful occasion of the kind than the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN's farewell, on December 19th, to Mr. C. E. Montague, after thirty-five years of service on the editorial staff. In the Manchester Reform Club two hundred sat down to dinner. They were representative of every department of the paper, and included a number of former members of the staff now famous in other fields—Mr. J. B. Atkins,

the new editor of the SPECTATOR, among them. The brief tributes of Mr. C. P. Scott and Mr. H. W. Nevins in proposing the toast of their distinguished colleague were exactly right; and Mr. Montague achieved a perfect reply in circumstances which could easily have been fatal to three men out of four. He did it by a skilful blend of reminiscence, apologia, and valedictory, in which there was not a moment of sentimentality. Most interesting, perhaps, was his emphatic repudiation of the charge, often brought against him, of having tried to form a school of editorial and critical writing. As a Liberal by instinct, he said, believing that everybody should learn to do his own job, he had never consciously influenced any man. One particular thing in the speeches, at least half a dozen of which were first rate, aroused no little scepticism in my mind. This was the assumption that the hand of C. E. M. could infallibly be traced in the leading columns throughout all the years. By certain of C. E. M.'s fellow labourers it could, but admiring outsiders were often far at sea.

* * *

If Sir Hall Caine is anxious to be accepted as an authority upon one of the great moments of American history—the making of the Gettysburg speech—he must by this time be rather sorry that he obeyed the impulse to write the letter which appears in a Sunday paper. Mr. George N. Barnes had started yet another of the ever-recurring debates on this topic, and Sir Hall Caine replied with the summary of a talk between himself and John Hay in Washington. Hay's version, of course, has long been accessible in the biographies; but, quite recently, all the facts, stories, and surmises related to the day of Gettysburg have been subjected to a merciless analysis by Mr. William E. Barton in the new two-volume *Life of Lincoln*. Sir Hall Caine may learn therefrom that his little story about the composition and utterance of the masterpiece is only a fragment of what Mr. Barton has brought together in a chapter that is a monument of pious labour. The speech, says the veteran novelist gravely, "occupied only a few minutes in delivery." Well, as it is merely a paragraph of less than 270 words, even Mr. Philip Snowden, indulging himself in his later snail-manner, could hardly make it last five minutes.

* * *

I suspect the quaint incident of Mr. Rogers and the marvellous Shakespearean treasures dug up in Warwickshire of being in some way connected with the Baconian excavations in the valley of the Severn (or was it the Wye?) that were tried and abandoned just before the outbreak of the War. From one of the leaders of that diverting episode I heard, some years ago, the whole story: how a group of American Baconians made out the cipher clue to the exact spot, organized the expedition, and then, guided by a scientific plan, began to dig for the manuscripts and other sacred relics. They had barely started when questions of right and privilege were raised and the work of excavation stopped. I never heard a story related with more precise circumstance and conviction. "And will you ever try again?" I asked my kindly acquaintance (he bore an honoured name). "Certainly," he replied, with that glow of faith which always impresses the sceptic; "we shall find it all, after the War."

* * *

A year or two before the War Mr. W. B. Yeats presided in London over a dinner given in honour of an Indian woman poet, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. Alice Meynell and other poets were there, and I recall a speech by poor Robert Ross in which he spoke of the romantic first

appearance of Mrs. Naidu in England, under the literary sponsorship of Sir Edmund Gosse. To-day, in Cawnpore, by a queer turn of fortune, this little poet occupies the chair of the Indian National Congress—many hundreds of political delegates coming from every province. Poetry, perhaps, is justified of all her children; but this destiny for a Bengali woman who writes delicate verse in English strikes me as most singular. Mrs. Naidu is a devout disciple of Gandhi; and the power of the Mahatma is an extraordinary thing. It could not, however, let us say, transform Mr. Walter de la Mare into a president of the Trade Union Congress.

* * *

In the course of an interesting statement on the relations between the Press and Wireless, made the other day to the Committee that is investigating this important question, Lord Riddell said that millions of people did not read the daily papers, but preferred to wait until Sunday to get the truth.

* * *

Lord Riddell's paper, the NEWS OF THE WORLD, in its issue of Sunday, December 20th, contained not less than thirty-five columns devoted to such matters as crime stories, divorce cases, and sexual offences, ten of those columns being given up to Hayley Morris and his doings at the Crow's Nest in Sussex. Quite a lot of this stuff, I suppose, must come under the head of Truth.

KAPPA.

LETTERS FROM A COUNTRY TEACHER

I.

AUGUST 14TH.

YOU write you "must know what your school is like, what your home is like, what you do in the evenings." And I have been here a week! And my mind is in a whirl and my house like a rubbish heap! So with your permission I will ignore the house—except to remind you that it is the four-roomed cottage with no bath-room and only a pump in the outhouse-scullery—and try to tell you of my first week in school. But all the time you are reading kindly remember that I wanted a country school, and that as soon as I have my school garden and house in working order I shall get long Sundays out of doors.

Well, it has seventy children and three classes. The babies, solemn silent children in boots much too heavy for them, are managed or mismanaged by a nice girl of sixteen. She has passed the School Leaving Examination in some subjects, lives in the village, and is all that can be got. At any rate, she is nice to the children; but think of how Florence brings up hers, or, indeed, how you struggled with us, and then think of twenty unsuitably clothed children, sitting quietly for nearly an hour at a time, constantly told to be good and not to fidget, all who can following in their books the child who is trying to read, and the rest playing with apparatus! Such apparatus! But there! I shall never end if I begin on the equipment of my babies' room. Nor can I at the moment say much about Mrs. Brown, the uncertificated lady, who takes, according to the classification of my predecessor, Standards I., II., III., and IV. She has been here for ten years, and knows the village—she, too, lives just on the outskirts. She is teaching as she was taught herself, I should think. Do you remember the school you sent me to when we first went to Blissingham? I believe I went into Standard III. Apart from the fact that the Standard III. in my school does not learn formal grammar, and perhaps has not such a skilful teacher of Arithmetic, it's just like that class

of twenty-five years ago! Truly! Sums from cards, dull geography and history readers, and one book of extracts; needlework that would make a child in a good school naughty to look at it; knitting cotton (it was white once) that has already been knitted up two or three times; a map of England with caterpillar mountains and Yorkshire coloured in yellow and Dorset pink.

The quicker ten-year-olds come to me, and all and sundry over ten, twenty-five in all, girls and boys, who at present, of course, look on me as a stranger, and are not going to give themselves away. As I constantly give myself away in spite of my best resolutions, you realize they are in the stronger position.

However, I left them to do their Scripture by themselves, and discovered that they at once talked, and as no one talks to the teachers in lessons, it gave me the assurance that with patience they would talk to me.

My predecessor had confided to me that "these sort of children can't do arithmetic." So I started very gaily with them, told them it was always difficult to begin with a new teacher, and that I proposed to begin at the very beginning with "babies' sums," and to make them harder and harder. They get two marks only for each of the first ten right, three marks for second, and so on. They must get ten of the first kind right before they go on to the second.

I meant them to get the first ten right! So I gave them additions like $2+4+6+8+10$. My dear! They didn't! Though I gave them time to check their work!

Of course they made slips. But I said very seriously we had better get rid of slips, so we would do another lot just to practise adding. Again, of course, a sprinkling of wrong sums, and one boy—a great creature who could pound me into that vile material you disguise with cream—had only one right. "He can't do sums, miss," came from all corners. "What do you do when Arithmetic comes then?" I asked him. "Errands, miss, or the garden," came from the class. Nothing from Roger. I felt Roger was a test case! It's one thing for pots in college to say to you, "Let the children develop on the side of their greatest interest, and put up with a minimum of formal training." But when you are confronted by a Roger who you know will say to an admiring crowd, "She can't make me do sums," it's a very different story. I saw at once I must eliminate his crowd! So, again very gaily, I said to him, "Will you go to the Babies' room and help them with their reading, and then I'll help you to do the sort of sums a man needs?" He went! He'd never been asked before to help any mortal with intellectual work; he had not a chorus ready to call out, "He can't do reading, miss." So he went. I must finish the story in brief. At 11.30 I gave my class silent Reading—they again talked, and, by the way, even at the end of the week that's still their theory of what working by themselves means—and I took Roger with me to do stock. I knew it was no good giving him ordinary sums. Of course, he counts all right with the books in front of him, and when I was counting "Our Empires," with six in his shelf, eight in mine, he got on all right. "Why, Roger, you can do this kind of sum. Now very carefully go and make me a stock sheet for my own use, and see your totals are the same as the number of books." Next week Roger is to check all the children's mark books. I'm going to be lavish with marks for a fortnight or two, for they all need practice in adding, and all think Arithmetic is no good. I must stop! I have still to lay my breakfast, pump the water for my bath, and collect the things I want for to-morrow's school. I don't know how rural teachers ever live to get a pension.

MARY.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

SIR,—At the end of Mr. Clive Bell's article upon the Pre-Raphaelites, it seemed inevitable that there should be some such footnote from you as "Mr. Bell has to be provocative to live. He has not seen any Pre-Raphaelite work." But as you did not, may I make a few remarks? One cannot let it go at that.

Artists turn raw materials into something which specifically enriches life, or does not. A critic should have a wide knowledge of the present possibilities of living, some imaginative insight into those of the future, and a discerning eye. Then there may be some chance that his stressings and underlinings will be of earthly service, but if he happens to be partially form and colour blind, he should limit the application of his praise and blame to his visual range. Or if, worse still, he is only sensitive to environment and to certain ideas, let him restrict himself to the criticism of the literary output of a coterie.

As Mr. Bell includes Ford Madox Brown at one end of his Pre-Raphaelites, one does not know whom he includes at the other, or, indeed, in the middle. He generalized?

Colour and form cannot be separated from ideas. When the ill-balanced strain to exclude ideas, the spectator, willy-nilly, throws them in. An artist, to control the spectator and call the tune, cannot ignore the existence of ideas. Decorators, the moulders and colourists of our intimate surroundings, tend, in aspirations after form and colour, to be careless of ideas. *Decoratively the Pre-Raphaelites enriched life.*

The actual representationalists are the realists and impressionists. Mr. Bell demands a representationalism which will assist his imagination; being told it is twelve o'clock midnight (presumably a gas jet was also featured) is not enough for him, he has to be convinced. Maybe his spiritual home is the movies?

It is apparent that he deceives himself. The appeal of the French schools of realists and impressionists is not to his eye. His sympathy is with the men, their ideas, their environment, their life. Their form is "significant," their colour brings a tear to his eye. But really it is the flavour of the carrot that wags his adoring—pen, not the form or the colour.—Yours, &c.,

A. RANDALL WELLS.

Slinfold Manor, Sussex.
December 20th, 1925.

"THE NEW SPIRIT IN THE EUROPEAN THEATRE"

SIR,—Permit me respectfully to call your attention to the fact that the notice of my book, "The New Spirit in the European Theatre," which appeared recently in your columns, contains a libellous interpretation, and certain misinterpretations amounting to misstatement of fact which are unworthy of the fairness of THE NATION. As they are exceedingly damaging both to me and my book, I trust you will find space to publish this correction.

1. I am told that I am "a man who wishes to combine in himself Jeremy Collier and Lenin." This means that as Lenin was a Communist I want (or am willing) to be a Communist. Recently Communism was declared illegal, and therefore, unless such an interpretation is supported by irrefutable evidence, it is a gross libel. I find there is no fact or opinion in my book to support it.

2. I am told that "a large part of the book consists of a Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality, &c." (the "&c." no doubt means of the theatre). On referring to the book I find that a comparatively small part consists of an exposure of the wartime exploitation of the basest suggestions of the crowd by the English and French theatrical financial Trusts, and a large part of the record of the exalted work accomplished in the other theatres of Europe.

3. I am told that "As far as can be gathered, the argument (of the book) is this: We have no national theatre, and so nothing to keep up the standard of morality. A national theatre by itself is no good—*vide* France—but

combined with a revolution breathes a new spirit into the drama. The more violent the revolution, the newer-spirited the drama. The proof lies in Russia." I find that the argument of my book, as clearly stated in the preface, is simply, "The War produced a new spirit in the theatres directly affected by it. It has taken the form of a conscious use of the drama as an educator in spiritual, political, economic, social and commercial values." The fairly large section on the National Theatre shows how this theatre acted as an educator in spiritual and social values. Elsewhere, in the section on the Community Theatre, I show that a new conception of a National Theatre is springing up. Instead of one roofed-in building, the "theatre" will consist of innumerable small and large theatrical organizations fully representative of the theatrical interests of the nation. I do not find that I have associated the revolution or Russia with this English Community National Theatre movement.

4. I read that "Mr. Carter believes Ben Jonson to have been one of those smutty Restoration dramatists." I do not find that I express any belief concerning Ben Jonson.—Yours, &c.,

HUNTLY CARTER.

[Mr. Huntly Carter's first three points concern matters of opinion upon his book—and we cannot see anything in what was said which goes beyond a legitimate opinion upon a book sent to us for review. As regards the fourth point, if the following passage from pp. 262, 263 of his book does not mean that Ben Jonson was a Restoration dramatist whose plays were related to "sex nastiness," we confess not to be able to understand what Mr. Carter did mean:—

"The Phoenix Society is a direct offshoot of the Stage Society. Its productions are a note on the history of social culture from the point of view of the Restoration dramatists, Wycherley, Congreve, Ben Jonson, and others. 'Some resemblance, perhaps, between the present unsettled, restless movement and the age of the Restoration has brought the drama which we name after the Restoration back into favour.' 'The "Restoration comedies" were much the same thing as our "bedroom farces," except that they were long drawn out; the seventeenth-century audience was satisfied to listen to smart people gossiping about their vices, while our audience wants to see smart people climbing through the transom in their pyjamas. Also, the old comedies are difficult to understand, because the language of polite obscenity changes from age to age, and we don't always know what Dryden and Congreve and Wycherley are talking about.' This seems to relate the subject of these plays to that sex nastiness which has increasingly marked the commercial plays since 1919, when the Phoenix Society was founded. Both series of plays have a propaganda value in exhibiting the profaneness and immorality of the English theatre at certain periods of its history."

—ED., THE NATION.]

"THE CHAPBOOK"

SIR,—In your issue for December 5th, on the front page among a quantity of Christmas books and annuals, chiefly for children, there was included a very short paragraph mentioning this year's issue of "The Chapbook" (Number 40) in a most derogatory and damaging manner. I cannot tell, of course, whether this is intended to be the only form of notice which will be given to "The Chapbook" in THE NATION. I should have thought that THE NATION would have been more in sympathy with such a publication as "The Chapbook" than to sweep aside the whole of its contents as obscure and negligible. (I have not got the notice before me now, and I cannot remember the exact words.) It would surely be fairer not to mention an annual such as this at all—an annual which has been compiled over a period of many months with the greatest possible care and judgment, and which includes several of the regular contributors to THE NATION—than to set it down in a brief paragraph which conveys, I venture to repeat, a most misleading and damaging impression.

Unfortunately this paragraph was only recently pointed out to me or I would have written before.—Yours, &c.,

HAROLD MONRO,
Editor of "The Chapbook."

December 14th, 1925.

"McG"

SIR,—“Kappa” in your issue of December 12th gave a very kindly and generous note on the authorship of “The Land and the Nation.” His free interpretation of my complex initial, McG, has added new terrors to my post basket and I must utter a squeak of protest.

An Irishman (of English descent), born and bred in Cornwall, must be part woven of threads from the Celtic fringe, but to the honourable name of “MacGregor” I have no claim. If Kappa and correspondents who write to me on business matters must amplify initials, may I beg them to look not to Scotland, but to Kelly? So they will find the name which is less satisfactory no doubt and much less easy for pure-bred Anglo-Saxons to pronounce, but which happens to be mine. Life, however, is short, and initials unexpanded should serve day-to-day needs.—Yours, &c.,

W. MCG. EAGAR.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

SIR,—May I comment on Mr. Augustine Birrell’s surprising article, “Abraham Lincoln,” in your November 21st issue?

Mr. Birrell inquires, Has Lincoln become an American national hero? Why does he ask that? He must know that that is the position Lincoln has occupied since his death, if not longer. It is not disputed that Lincoln’s firmness of purpose saved the Union, and in so doing made the nation. How could he but be its hero?

You can hardly read an American book on any subject—other than technical—without coming sooner or later to his name. Even in his lifetime he had a kind of legendary fame—as witness the negro who, expressing a desire to “see Linkum,” was rebuked in the words, “No man has seen Linkum.”

Mr. Birrell says that “He never really came into his own until an assassin had struck him down”; and that “His popularity in England only arose after a younger generation had discovered that he fought to maintain ‘the Union,’ and was thus thought to be an example to those who were oppos-

ing Home Rule for Ireland.” Yet he “came into his own” so far that a frequent accusation brought by his enemies was of his absolutism; and as to England’s estimate of him, does Mr. Birrell recall the verses in PUNCH on his death (quoted from memory):—

“Amid the mourners at his head and feet
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for thee?

Yes, *he had lived* to turn thee from thy sneer,
To shame thy pencil and confute thy pen,
To make thee own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men?”

From which it appears that so typical an English opinion as PUNCH’s had been reversed during Lincoln’s lifetime.

Mr. Birrell says that how on earth Lincoln won his first election is a question hard to answer. Yet any history of the time (of whatever bias) will explain the combining causes that made him the only possible nominee of a united Republican Party with a reasonable hope of victory. There is nothing obscure about them.

Mr. Birrell says that “The majority of Lincoln’s Cabinet never ceased to wonder how he got among them, or to do their best to secure the defeat at the next Presidential election of the man they nicknamed ‘the gorilla.’” Of course, there is not space in so short an article for detailed accuracy; but this summary seems to me altogether misrepresentative of the relation between Lincoln and his Cabinet.

Seward, the most distinguished and experienced among them, the man who but for his extreme abolitionism must have gained the Presidency rather than Lincoln, who thought to rule the President, was quickly converted into his loyal lieutenant. There were difficulties, of course, due to Lincoln’s perception that he must draw into the administration representatives of all sections of the party; but was there any outstanding Minister, except Chase, who did not come to work loyally under him?

I have not yet had the opportunity of reading the biography of Lincoln Mr. Birrell reviews; it may be that Mr. Birrell is ignoring all but the facts as given there.—Yours, &c.,

L. K.

Eastbourne, November 29th, 1925.

THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

By MARY MACCARTHY.

A DAY or two before the Feast, by the law of reversed effort, people seem irresistibly drawn to Scrooge’s little fire, the spiritless cup of gruel, the misanthropic silence.

Had I not, therefore, better begin by making an alphabetical Christmas glossary? When the whole gamut of festal words is before the reader, a fitting mood may rise within him:—

“Almonds, Aunts, Angels; Baron of Beef, Boar, Butler, Brandy, Berries, Bells, Basting; Crèche, Christmas candles, Children, Choirs, Crackers, Carols, Chestnuts, Champagne; Decorations, Dancing, Dyspepsia, Dress; Elks, Evergreens, Expense; Frankincense, Flames, Fire, Fairy Tales, and Fir Trees; Ghosts, Gifts, Grimm, Games; Hans (Andersen), Hosts, Holly; Infant, Icicles, Influenza, Invitations, Ivy; Jests; Kitchen, Kings; Logs; Manger, Mummers, Mince-pies, Mistletoe; Nutcrackers, Noise; Oranges, Oratorio; Pantomime, Presents, Plumpuddings; Quinine, Quantity; Raisins, Rush, Roasting, Robins, Relations; Stables, Stars, Shepherds, Snapdragon, Scrooge, Snow, Skates, Sausages, Service, Sermons, Sir Roger, Surfeit; Tips, Tinsel, Toys, Turkeys, Trees, and Tapers; Unite; Virgin; Waits, Wenceslas, Wine, Wassail, Wise men; Yule, Yore, and the Zeitgeist.”

The words, “Flames, Fire, Fairy Tales, and Fir Trees,” might surely fill anyone with pleasure? But which are the words that affect that kind old gentleman,

my neighbour, so unpleasantly? When I met him in the street a few days ago, he said with solemn deliberation, “I am going away—to escape the gloom of the festal season.” Clearly, he is sensitive to “Dyspepsia, Decorations, Invitations, Relations, Rush, Jests, Noise, Carols, Tinsel, and Tips.” He has no children, and therefore organized gusto depresses him. He is the kindest of men all the year round; I see he actually has scruples even about getting out of keeping Christmas, and so, as our ways parted, I shouted out to reach his deaf ear—“It is a children’s festival. Where there are no children about it’s a different matter.”

Oliver Cromwell, spoiler of everything for the children, did his best to put an end to the festival for ever. It was denounced as a heathen practice to eat a mince-pie in 1644, and December 25th was ordered to be observed as a market day. Already, by 1633, all feasts and fun had come to be thought wicked by strict Puritans, and in that year Prynne had attacked players as the ministers of Satan; theatres as the Devil’s chapels; cards, music, false hair, and “the decking of houses at Christmas with evergreen.”

John Bunyan was typical of the anti-mince-pie spirit. His cries of remorse lead us to imagine he is going to confess to some gross and violent vice; then we discover he is only moaning and groaning about *hocky*! He cannot eradicate “A love of hocky and of dancing on the village green.”

Milton is the more sympathetic. He only excused himself "Festivities and Jests in which I acknowledge my faculty to be very slight."

Well, the Restoration brought back the mince-pies and evergreens, and, judging by "The Queen-like Closet or Rich Cabinet stored with all manner of Rare Receipts," a cookery book of Charles II.'s date, a very great deal was consumed on such occasions. Here is "A Bill of Service for Extraordinary Feasts in a great house":—

"The First Course.—1. A Grand Sallad. 2. A boiled Capon or chickens. 3. A boiled Pike or Bream. 4. A Florentine in Puff-paste. 5. A Haunch of venison roasted. 6. A Lomber Pie. 7. A Dish of Green Geese. 8. A fat Pig with a pudding in the belly. 9. A venison pasty. 10. A Chicken Pie. 11. A Dish of young Turkeys. 12. A Potato Pie. 13. A couple of Caponets. 14. A set Custard.

"The Second Course.—1. A dish of chickens roasted. 2. Souced Conger or Trouts. 3. An artichoke Pie. 4. A cold Baked meat. 5. A souced Pig. 6. A Dish of Partridges. 7. An Oringado Pie. 8. A dish of quails. 9. Another cold Baked Meat. 10. Fresh Salmon. 11. A Dish of Tarts. 12. A Joll of Sturgeon.

"The Third Course.—A Dish of fried Perches. A Dish of Green Peas. A Dish of artichokes. A Dish of Lobsters. A Dish of Prawns or Shrimps. A Dish of Anchovies. A Dish of Pickled Oysters. Two or three dried Tongues.

"Note: That when your last course is ended, you must serve in your Meat Jellies, your Cheeses of several sorts, and your sweet meats."

But it must be remembered that such great houses as Knole, Audley End, or Wilton, had as many inhabitants as a good-sized village; therefore the "Bill of Service" given in the "Queen-like Closet" was no greater, in proportion, than a menu given in Mrs. Beeton's great volume for a luncheon for a family party, with her coloured plates showing rows of mitred napkins, and pineapples and pyramids of fruit down the centre of the table.

The word "Mrs. Beeton" brings us with a leap from the Restoration to a Victorian Feast. A typical Christmas of 1925 would be hard to describe now. Its character or form cannot be clearly focussed at such close quarters. It is into a mid-Victorian household that the reader shall, therefore, be led and there left. Let us just open the first chapter of a novel in which a certain Mr. and Mrs. Spencer are keeping their Christmas.

Mr. Spencer, with his masterful and tender devotion to Mrs. Spencer, his family business, his hunters, his Bible, his seven young children, is "early Victorian" in constitution; it is Mrs. Spencer who is "mid-Victorian." She is modest, religious, romantic, full of images and symbolism.

Let us say they have driven in their high dog-cart to the Cathedral town from their country house, for the midnight service on Christmas Eve, and have returned under the clear stars. The hoarfrost on the Downs, and on the wool of the backs of the flock, has made Mrs. Spencer think of shepherds and wise men and kings. Next day they are seated at Christmas dinner, with all their children, Mr. Spencer's two sisters, and the friend from India who always spends Christmas with them when he is in England, and the Pre-Raphaelite minor poet whom Mrs. Spencer has rescued from suicide. The latter only eats a little blue flame from the plum-pudding and is silent, but quite happy, watching the children. The dear, bald baby, with his starry blue eyes, is to have a *langue de chat* of turkey; and, with his quilted bib, his neat woollen jacket, his small pink hands, he sits up in his high chair and beats with a spoon recklessly upon mahogany, glass, silver, his brother's head, until it is taken away from him. He is to grow into a delightful man and has been perfect from the minute he was born. His brothers and sisters gaze with amazement

at the turkey. That a bird can be so enormous! They gaze at it as at a distant range of hills with rolling downs, precipices, and caves.

Later in the day, there is the Christmas Tree. The baby gazes at the lights intently, from his nurse's arms. The tree reminds Mrs. Spencer, and most people, of romantic forests and deep winter snows, as she distributes gifts. The Christmas Tree was introduced into England by Prince Albert, and so those who like to limit their imaginations more severely can anyhow take great pleasure in it as a perfect "period piece," like a Baxter print, a pyramid of wax fruit, or a prism glass.

The baby, who has been playing on the floor with the box of his toy from the tree, presently cries for the first time that day. The farm-house tree made of green shavings that he has been eating has been jerked from his mouth by his nurse. Then the other children begin pushing and shoving; a toy is broken here; an injustice acutely felt is screamed over there; good children, hot, over-excited, are turning into naughty children. Mr. Spencer, with inspiration, suggests a run out of doors in the dark. Instantly they disperse like starlings startled from a quarrel. The boys, like little pilots in their stout jackets with their lanterns, the girls, like little miners with theirs, race away out over the snow under the stars, as good as gold again.

"The tree was lovely—my hands were *crum* full of presents," says a tiny little girl, running.

"The owls is as fierce as anything on Christmas night. They may *peck* out your eyes!" says a brother who has fantastic fears, but feels safe just now as he jogs along across the lawn, making for the Downs.

Mrs. Spencer throws open the drawing-room windows wide, "to let in God's stars," and to hear the voices of the children playing and laughing far away. She piles on those "logs of apple-wood" she is apt to make much of. But Mr. Spencer knows that damp spitting means a bad fire, in spite of the old bellows. He piles on great lumps of coal, and uses the *Times* to draw up the fuel till it crackles. He shouts injunctions to the children about returning soon, hears protests, shuts down the windows, and draws Mrs. Spencer's Morris chintzes across them. They settle comfortably down by the great fire with their books.

The minor poet, with his long, taper fingers, takes Mrs. Spencer's Blake from the poetry shelf. He reads "The Nurse's Song" to himself. Though it is a summer poem, he feels it is a carol:—

"No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep.
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all covered with sheep.
Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.
The little ones leaped and shouted and laughed,
And all the hills echoed."

NOTES ON LAW AND ORDER

By J. A. HOBSON.

V.—THE NEED FOR HUMOUR*

BERGSON hit upon a serviceable half-truth when he made laughter turn upon the behaviour of a human being as if he were a machine. The scholar, philosopher, or professionalist who brings the severe logic or the formulas of his special branch of learning to bear upon some ordinary situation in practical affairs cuts a ridiculous figure. Why? Because he is essentially unequal to the occasion. He is the exponent

* No. I. appeared on October 24th; No. II. on November 14th; No. III. on November 28th; and No. IV. on December 5th.

of an intellectual routine that must always lag behind the requirements of the present. His weight of learning, logic, procedure, cramp his liberty for handling a new situation in ordinary life. "Mathematics," remarked Oliver Wendell Holmes, "breeds a despotic way of thinking." This applies to every scientist in proportion as his science is "exact." The professor in politics has always been a byword—an essentially comic figure—out of place, bringing into the discussion and settlement of human problems the method and temper appropriate to measurable and reliable material. Even if his specialism falls outside the exact sciences, belonging to the humanities, the burden of precedent, which large acquaintance with the past secretly imposes, quite visibly impairs his agility and willingness to take risks. His truisms tend to conservatism, because they cannot help exaggerating the extent to which history repeats itself. It is to the historian that we look for the most frequent utterance of a false determinism in the judgments that begin "Human nature being what it is," and "The whole course of history teaches us." Pride of intellectual property constantly impels to this statical view of human conduct. Even great men of science commonly concern themselves over-much with the codification of their laws, neglecting the cutting edge of science in its more hazardous excursions into the hinterlands of knowledge. I have already touched upon the fallacy of system-mongering and the æsthetic and property instincts that impel towards the practice. But here it is the comedy of such procedure that interests us. Great system-mongers, like Comte, Bentham, Spencer, are engaged in being comic upon the largest possible scale, i.e., putting the whole creative process of man and the universe under the fetters of formula. They do precisely what Molière's pedant, lawyer, or doctor does when he automatically applies his jargon and treatment to cases where they have no relevance. Our philosopher, scientist, historian are right in holding that the future will resemble the past in large measure. Where they err is in failing to realize that the bit of the future which does not resemble the past is for that very reason the most interesting and important part. It is always the discontinuous, the novel, the breach of the rule, that fastens itself upon us as spectators and actors in the human drama. So far as we are scientists, or can handle the elaborate routine of life by rules of thumb or thought, all goes smoothly. But the variants, the novelties, the cases where experience is dumb, these call for the artist—or the gambler. For if you haven't got the creative instinct with some skilled aptitude for handling the novel, life is for you nothing but a gamble, a game of chance—"just one damned thing after another!" If you possess this instinct and this aptitude, you may be said to be an artist. For it belongs to the artist to handle new opportunities in a creative way. But what sort of artist? A Philosopher? No, I think not. He has too heavy a hand for the job. Shall we say a Humorist?

It is a pity that this word has been so narrowed and degraded from its Elizabethan use that Jonson would scarcely recognize it. And yet perhaps its modern meaning still retains a necessary ingredient for the artist of life. For the true humorist is not the mere spectator some pretend, laughing, however good-naturedly, at the queernesses and follies of the great mundane process. He can take a hand himself in life, and, by virtue of his keenness and imaginative sympathy, help to convert a game of chance into a game of skill. The contemplative attitude of a Montaigne does not fill the rôle. To extract the richest humour out of life one must experiment as well as observe. Especially must one

experiment with oneself, the richest and most reliable material at hand. This explains why, upon the whole, we prefer the title humorist to that of humanist, which to many may seem better accredited to the part. It carries certain qualities of verve and lightness—I had almost said levity—needed for the perception and the handling of novelty and opportunity. The associations of humanism are a little over-serious for the art. Knowledge is taken by its devotees a little too gravely. It does not do to be over-steeped in culture. It will hardly leave you spry enough to handle quick, unforeseen occurrences.

If, however, it be felt that a humorist is too much identified with the comic spirit, we may at least insist that humour is the first and most general requisite for the artist in life. Whenever the tension of routine is broken, whenever the unexpected happens, or history fails to repeat itself, anger, fear, admiration, pity, or disgust may overwhelm all other emotions at the spectacle. But where none of these emotions prevails, humour steps in and asserts a reversionary right to the novelty. The sudden contrast which its discontinuity, its incongruity, presents, the element of surprise, is an assertion of the creative in the phenomenal process, and brings into sympathetic action the creative intelligence in man. Our first reaction to it is a play of humour which perceives a "happy thought," a quaintness of behaviour, a strange event—something surprising which we must take into account and handle with interest and skill, as lying outside the safer low-grade thought and feeling with which we carry on our routine life. Things that "happen" make us "happy" not merely in the sense that we are interested spectators, but because they take us out of a groove and supply us with the material for free creative activity. To deal with things that "happen" we exercise intelligence, initiative, and ingenuity, and by helping to make things happen launch ourselves on the creative current of life.

But if things are "happening" all the time, the rush overwhelms us and paralyzes intelligent activity. We need, then, a safe, steady background of law and order where the happenings are so small as not to count. So once more, by a slightly different road, we return to our prime economy of compromise.

Happiness consists perhaps in a general sense of well-being derived from the smooth rhythm of an orderly life, with occasional swift excursions into fields of adventure where the creative impulse may enjoy itself. This "general sense of well-being" is rooted in social order. The creative impulse is the individual's break away, usually consumed in personal enjoyment, but sometimes bringing home the seeds of fruitful change within the social order.

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

By C. M. YONGE.

AS a result of his breeding experiments, the Abbot Mendel in 1865 gave to the world three conceptions which represent the foundation of the great modern science of Heredity. Unlike his predecessors, he studied not the whole animal or plant but only certain definitely contrasted characters, such as round and wrinkled seed or long and short stem in the pea. By crossing individuals which possessed these contrasted characters, he found that these were inherited according to definite rules and quite independently of the other characters which go to make up the individual; and this led him to the conception of "unit characters," since they behaved like

units in inheritance. He discovered, moreover, that, though the hybrid individual was in its nature mixed—not "pure"—yet the sex cells or gametes (eggs and sperms as the case may be) were invariably pure, there being a segregation in the gametes, each possessing a single complete set of the factors which are responsible for the production of the characters. Finally, the zygote—the fertilized egg: the starting point of the new individual—being formed by the union of egg and sperm, contained two sets of factors, the one from the male parent and the other from the female parent, and, though these might be identical, in which case the individual would be pure in every respect, or dissimilar with regard to one or more factors, in which case the owner would be hybrid for the characters for which they were responsible, yet in either case the zygote had a double structure.

Mendel's laws were purely empirical, he knew of no mechanism within the body which could account for the results of his experiments. This mechanism was not discovered until later, when the nature and behaviour of the nucleus which is present in every cell came to be investigated. Within the nucleus lie a number (fixed for the species, but very variable for different species) of darkly staining rods which have become known as chromosomes. Although not apparent during the resting stage of the cell, they invariably appear, and in exactly the same form, whenever the cell divides. Each chromosome is paired, so that there are two complete sets, and, since they divide with the utmost exactness at every division of the cell, they retain their identity throughout all the cells in the body. Before the formation of the gametes, however, there is always a "reduction" division in the course of which the chromosomes, instead of each dividing, come together in pairs, like to like, and are then separated into two halves, each consisting of a complete single set of chromosomes. The fertilization of the egg by the sperm is accomplished by a fusing of the two nuclei, so that the new compound nucleus consists, as in the parents, of a double set of chromosomes. It is widely accepted at present that on the chromosomes lie the factors which are responsible for the appearance of the characters of the individual, while in the reduction division is recognized the mechanism which ensures the segregation of the factors in the gametes, since only one factor for each character can pass into each gamete; finally, the fusing of the male and female gametes results in the double nature of the zygote and the adult organism into which it develops.

It was inevitable, since the early development of Heredity was in the hands of zoologists who were almost exclusively morphologists—students of structure, not function—that great emphasis should have been laid at first upon the structure of the chromosomes. The factors were visualized as a row of discrete dots which together made up the chromosomes. This attitude—though a perfectly natural stage in the development of a new science—had, and continues to have, unfortunate results on general biological thought, since it led to a dogmatic attitude with regard to Heredity. It was held that the constitution of the adult individual was absolutely settled once and for all by the nature of the factors which were borne on its chromosomes. Environment, therefore, could have no effect; if the stock was "bad," improved conditions or, in the case of mankind, better education were useless and might even be definitely harmful.

One of the great modern developments in biology has been the recognition of the great importance of environment. This has been revealed by research in many and most diverse fields. Work on tissue culture has shown that the development of the different tissues of the body is not determined by something within the cells, but by the environment in which the cells find themselves. The unspecialized cells of the embryo become differentiated according to where they lie in relation to other parts of the developing organism. Pieces of the skin or kidney lose their specialized structure when cultivated in media outside the body, and become undifferentiated cells such as are found in the embryo; but if pieces of the connective tissue which lie in contact with

the skin or kidney are added to the cultures, the cells begin to redifferentiate and become once more specialized skin or kidney cells. Again, sex is determined by the factorial content of the individual and so, according to the old view, it ought to be unchangeable; yet there are many instances of the sex of an animal being dependent upon its environment. For example, the American slipper limpet, *Crepidula*, lives in chains, each member being attached to the shell of the one beneath it; the eldest members of any chain are always female, the middle ones hermaphrodite, and the youngest male. If a young *Crepidula* settles on the end of a chain, it develops into a male, becoming later hermaphrodite and finally female; but if it settles on its own—the founder of a new chain—it develops immediately into a female. The sex assumed depends on the external environment, just as the development of the different tissues depends on the internal environment.

In Heredity also the importance of environment is at last becoming recognized, as Professor Jennings emphasizes in his admirably lucid essay "Prometheus,"* which it is to be hoped will be widely read. Although the rest of Mendel's conclusions stand, his conception of unit characters can no longer be accepted. Every character is the product of not one but many factors—the absence of any one of which may result in the non-appearance of the character, a fact which accounts for Mendel's error. Each factor is now conceived of as a centre of chemical activity, not as a definite structure, and it is probably the interaction of the chemicals or "hormones" produced by the different factors which leads to the appearance of the various characters. The manner in which these substances react with one another, and therefore the nature of the characters to which they give rise, is dependent on the environment. The axolotl of the Mexican streams, a sluggish creature like a large newt with gills, a tail bearing a fin, and all the characters needed for an aquatic existence, may become, if conditions are suitably altered, a terrestrial animal without gills or fin and with a smaller and more easily managed body—the amblystoma. It may become mature and lay eggs in either condition, and the offspring, if the environment remains the same, develop like their parents.

The recognition of the influence of environment represents a great advance in biology, but its social implications are no less important. It is impossible to control the factorial content of even the lowliest animal except for some few factors, and it is quite out of the question for so highly organized and so slowly breeding a creature as Man. The best that can be hoped for from eugenics is the cutting out of such definitely harmful characters as feeble-mindedness, which is known to be inherited. For the rest, the mating of brilliant parents, though it may produce on the average rather more intelligent children than the mating of stupid parents (and such difference as there is may be due largely to the difference in intellectual environment), is just as unlikely to give rise to children of exceptional brilliance. But it is possible to control environment and so to order social conditions that the highest qualities that lie latent in the constitution of any child shall be able freely to develop. We cannot alter the factors on the chromosomes, but we can influence them in their interactions so as to make them give the best results possible.

Herein lies the biological justification of all schemes of social amelioration, and the final answer to all those who advance the old argument that any improvement in social conditions, by abolishing the struggle for existence and so rendering natural selection inoperative, leads to an increase in the unfit who would not have been able to survive under "natural" conditions. Natural selection does exist, and what is essential is that we should so arrange the conditions of life that it will have the very best of material upon which to work, and so that it will act by picking out for survival those members of the race who are mentally and socially "fit," and not leave conditions such that life becomes a struggle in which the selfishly assertive and purely animal have the advantage—the superior "survival value"—over the finer types of mankind.

* "Prometheus." By H. S. Jennings. (Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d.)

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

WYCHERLEY'S "The Gentleman Dancing Master," which was revived by the Phoenix Society on Sunday, is an early and unconvincing work by the master. There is a thinness of plot and sameness of situation, which become tiresome as the play proceeds. The first two acts, however, contain much witty dialogue, and foreshadow that mastery of the stage which was the gift of Wycherley above all his contemporaries. Like the play, the acting and production fell off lamentably as the evening proceeded, and several times all control over the text was lost. As a general rule, each point was stressed with an intolerable violence, noisiness being substituted for suppleness, and clumsiness for speed. It is difficult to see why anyone should turn out on Sunday evening for a performance of this kind.

* * *

The insufficient acting at the Q Theatre perhaps makes one unduly critical of "The Lifting," which was recently reviewed in these columns. Still it is difficult to believe that in any case the play would have seemed worthy of some of the praise that has been bestowed upon it. Save for their exotic Hebridean accent, the characters are stock figures of melodrama, and when the actors relapse from Gaelic and speak their own Sadler's Wells, the whole atmosphere becomes more genuine. Here are these peasants, passionate and simple, without fear or meanness, chivalrous, hot-blooded, and true as steel. They go straight from the gibbet's edge to the arms of their mistress, and pour forth their hearts' emotion, while the "sodgers" are still searching for them in the garden. It is doubtful if even Hebridean peasants in the year 1752 were so far superior to other human beings as is made out in "The Lifting." In any case such very simple unvarying emotions can only be described by the world's greatest artists. Yet perhaps something can still be done with the Gael, and I am looking forward to Mr. David Garnett's comedy dealing with Dr. Johnson's visit to the Hebrides. The Doctor, I am sure, would have pooh-poohed the high-flown sentiments of the natives.

* * *

Dancing is an exhilarating and satisfactory exercise; but at most night-clubs and places where they dance, so many people gather together for the ostensible purpose of dancing that this end is frustrated, and there is scarcely room even to stand on the floor. And when I go to such places, I always ask myself—why are we here? For crowds are a torment to good dancers, who rather frequent such austere serious establishments as the Empress Rooms; while bad dancers cannot find much direct pleasure in the pursuit, either here or anywhere else. No!—dancing is as often as not merely an excuse for going out with a few people you know, and sitting in their company among a lot of people whom you *don't* know—an occupation irrationally numbered among the delights of life. For dancing has now become a necessary ingredient in the concoction of any entertainment; and to a dinner, theatre, river-party, concert, or exhibition of pictures, you must always add dancing to taste. The new Chenil Galleries have wisely recognized this, and have found a place for dancing in their venturesome scheme, by the provision of a large, swung floor and a good band. To these essentials are added pictures by Augustus John and others, for the beguilement of intervals. The venture deserves success, for here is a place where you can really dance.

* * *

The Film Society last Sunday gave an interesting and varied programme. After an extremely naive "Resurrection" film—"Muggins, V.C.," an English film of 1911—and some very beautiful slow-motion pictures of animals, we were shown "Raskolnikov," taken from Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment."

This is a film of German origin, with actors from Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre. The acting and production are on a very high level of competence; M. Chmara as Raskolnikov is at moments superb, and many of the scenes are very moving. It suffers, however, from its monotony of horror—horror which in the literary form can be relieved or momentarily suspended, but which in the film, where it is impossible to indicate to any great extent personal feelings and reactions, is bound to become oppressive and to lose its effect from lack of contrast. The last item was an abstract film, "A quoi rêvent les jeunes films," produced (and personally introduced at this performance) by the Comte Etienne de Beaumont, and photographed by Man Ray. It is full of suggestions of cinematographic possibilities. Human faces are introduced, some very pretty moving patterns, and a giddy journey by water and by land round Paris, which reproduces many of the thrills of the Sensation Park at Wembley.

* * *

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, December 26.—"Dick Whittington," at the Lyceum.

"Treasure Island," at the Strand.

"Androcles and the Lion," at the Regent.

"Biddy," at the Fortune.

"Too Much Money," at Little Theatre.

"Where the Rainbow Ends," at Holborn Empire.

OMICRON.

ON THE LAKE

A CANDLE lit in darkness of black waters,
A candle set in the drifting prow of a boat,
And every tree to itself a separate shape,
Now plummy, now an arch: tossed trees
Still and dishevelled; dishevelled with past growth,
Forgotten storms; left tufted, tortured, sky-rent,
Even now in stillness; stillness on the lake,
Black, reflections pooled, black mirror
Pooling a litten candle, taper of fire;
Pooling the sky, double transparency
Of sky in water, double elements,
Lying like lovers, light above, below,
Taking, from one another, light; a gleaming.
A glow reflected, fathoms deep, leagues high,
Two distances meeting at a film of surface
Thin as a membrane, sheet of surface, fine
Smooth steel; two separates, height and depth,
Able to touch, giving to one another
All their profundity, all their accidents,
—Changeable mood of clouds, permanent stars,—
Like thoughts in the mind hanging a long way off,
Revealed between lovers, friends. Peer in the water
Over the boat's edge; seek the sky's night-heart;
Are they near, are they far, those clouds, those stars
Given, reflected, pooled? are they so close
For a hand to clasp, to lift them, feel their shape,
Explore their reality, take a rough possession?
Oh no! too delicate, too shy for handling,
They tilt at a touch, quiver to other shapes,
Dance away, change, are lost, drowned, scared;
Hands break the mirror, speech's crudity
The surmise, the divining;
Such things so deeply held, so lightly held,
Subtile, imponderable, as stars in water
Or thoughts in another's thoughts.
Are they near, are they far, those stars, that knowledge?
Deep? shallow? solid? rare? The boat drifts on,
And the litten candle single in the prow,
The small, immediate candle in the prow,
Burns brighter in the water than any star.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

THE OVERBURY MYSTERY

"THE Overbury Mystery," by His Honour Judge Edward Abbott Parry (Fisher Unwin, 21s.), is an extremely readable and interesting book.

The Overbury case is one of those "mysteries" which will be found inadequately dealt with both in learned histories and in popular books about crime and criminals. On April 26th, 1613, Sir Thomas Overbury was, on the order of James I., committed to the Tower, his crime being his refusal to go as the King's ambassador to Russia. Five months later, on September 15th, still a prisoner, he died, and was buried by his gaolers, "a very unfortunate man," as a contemporary wrote in a letter recording his death, "for nobody almost pities him and his own friends speak that indifferently of him." But two years later in the Guildhall, before the famous lawyer, Lord Chief Justice Coke, there began "the Great Oyer of Poisoning." First Richard Weston, a wretched underling, was charged with poisoning Sir Thomas Overbury by means of "Rosalgar, White Arsenick, and Mercury Sublimate," found guilty, and hanged. Then Mrs. Turner, a notorious go-between, was charged with the same offence, convicted, and hanged. Then Sir Gervase Helwys, Governor of the Tower, was charged with the same offence, convicted, and hanged. And finally, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, the King's favourite, and his wife, the beautiful Frances Howard, the real quarry in this amazing hunt, were tried in Westminster Hall, convicted, and condemned to death.

The story is a fascinating one, whether from the point of view of history and manners, or from that of mystery and romance. Judge Parry felt the fascination fifty years ago, when, as a boy, he heard the talk between two lawyers at his father's table turn upon the case. Since that time, as his book clearly shows, he has devoted an immense amount of labour not only to unravelling the mystery, but to acquiring a knowledge of the history of the times. The result is a fascinating book. It is a curious fact that such a book on such a subject could probably only have been written in our time. It is really a work of considerable learning, and must have involved much research. But our fathers and grandfathers would not have considered it a "serious" work at all. It is much too readable; there are no footnotes; Judge Parry almost goes out of his way to make us forget his historical learning; historical figures, like James I., Somerset, Coke, Bacon, are treated as if they had once been alive and could be made to live again for us, and their psychology and vices are frankly discussed. The law of moral contradiction, so dear to historians, which assumes that the dead must have been either good or bad, is not assumed by Judge Parry, and we find ourselves accepting the conjecture that an extremely immoral lady, who almost certainly conspired to poison Overbury, was probably a very charming person. Here you will find no trace of that wooden immortality which English sculptors and most historians seem to regard as the only characteristic of great men worthy to be recorded. Finally, Judge Parry refuses to make a most romantic story dull and respectable merely because it is historical.

If you wish to see the difference between our fathers' view of history and famous men and our own, you may

turn to the Dictionary of National Biography. Most of the characters who appear in Judge Parry's pages will be found in that invaluable work. There you will find the story of their lives and a discussion of the Overbury mystery. I believe Judge Parry's work to be, even in the most technical sense, more learned and accurate than that of the "authorities" who wrote the articles on Somerset and Overbury in the Dictionary—the real difference between them is that the authorities have, with great skill, contrived to extract both from the story and from the characters every drop of juice. Apparently in 1895 it was considered that in history romance and reality were indecent—they had to be somehow or other eliminated.

I have only one criticism of Judge Parry. I think he is a little unfair to Overbury himself, and this is strange, because he is so extraordinarily fair to the other actors in the drama. It is true that the man was not a lovable character; he was selfish, cold, and calculating. But in this he was no worse—in fact, I think, he was a good deal better—than many of the barbarians who formed the Court of James I. The great Coke, and the still greater Francis Bacon, cut sorry figures in these pages, but both are rightly treated by Judge Parry with scrupulous fairness. He is lenient to Somerset, for whom little more can be said than that he probably had nothing to do with Overbury's death, and even to the wretched James; he is more than lenient to Frances Howard. To Overbury he is scarcely just. The man was unsympathetic, but he deserves a little sympathy. He was a man of culture and intelligence, living among a most corrupt set of dangerous barbarians. He was no more corrupt than the swarm of courtiers who founded or improved the fortunes of noble families by pandering to the pæderastic inclinations of King James. He was not more calculating and cold than Northampton, nor less scrupulous than Bacon in gaining place and power. If he tried to use for his own purposes the influence which the King's male mistress had over the King, he was only doing what all the great nobles were trying to do, and what great nobles have always done, whether the King be James and the mistresses Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, or the King Louis and the mistresses Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry. In fact, poor Overbury's crime, for which he paid with his life in the Tower of London, was that he was a country gentleman poaching on the preserves of the Howards and Herberts. Overbury himself, it may be remarked, in his famous "Characters," had prophetically written his own epitaph in the last sentence of "An Intruder into Favour":—

"He is mountain's monkey, that climbing a tree, and skipping from bough to bough, gives you back his face; but come once to the top, he holds his nose up into the wind, and shews you his tail: yet all this gay glitter, shews on him, as if the sun shone in a puddle; for he is a small wine that will not last; and when he is falling, he goes of himself faster than misery can drive him."

Yes, when Overbury was falling, he went of himself faster than misery could drive him.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

THE SERAJEVO MURDER

The Serajevo Crime. By M. EDITH DURHAM. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

STUDENTS who have followed the output of information with regard to the origins of the Great War are aware that a new and lurid light has been shed upon the crime which was its immediate origin. This evidence has now been brought together for English readers by Miss Durham. As introduction to her exposition she gives an account of the previous history of Austro-Serbian relations. She reminds the reader that, for many years, Serbia was in the pocket of Austria, who had saved her in 1885 from annihilation by the Bulgarians. The removal, in the year 1903, of the Serbian King, Alexander, by the traditional method of assassination, and the substitution of the Karageorgevich, Peter, marked the passage of Serbia from the Austrian to the Russian side. Four years later, the British Government, having now made the Entente with Russia, recognized the new régime. In the same year her protégé was fomenting a plot to murder Prince Nikola of Montenegro. The formal annexation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary in 1908, and the insistence by Europe on the recognition of that act by Serbia, filled the Serbs rather with rage than with despair. As one of them remarked at the time to Miss Durham: "If this continues all our hopes are lost. We shall not make Great Serbia."

He was right; for Great Serbia could only be achieved by the destruction of the Austrian Empire; and to that end Serbian efforts continued to be steadily directed. The instruments were two societies, one open—the *Narodna Odbrana*, founded in 1908—the other secret, the "Union or Death," called also the "Black Hand," founded in 1911. The activities of the former were said to be "cultural." They were defined as the "collection of material concerning the situation and condition in Austria-Hungary, and especially the enlightening of the people in Serbia as to the ideals, rights, and duties of Serbia and the Serbian people." This society, however, was closely connected with the other, both in membership and control. On the "Union or Death" much light was thrown in the trial at Salonica in 1917. It was strictly secret. "The organization," we learn, "considers revolutionary war preferable to cultural war." Members were not known to one another, but only to the central administration, whose orders they were bound implicitly to obey. . . . "Before becoming a member each must know that by so doing he loses his individuality. . . . Should harm result from his conduct to the Organization he will be punished by death." A fantastic oath was administered, such as is common in these associations of uneducated and primitive men. Among the members were a number of officers who had been concerned in the murder of 1903. Its existence was known to, and apparently approved of by, the Government, and in 1914 its leader, one Dimitrievich, was chief of the Intelligence Service of the Serbian Army. This man, we are told, "loved adventures, dangerous secret meetings, and mysterious activities." He was also "a genuine patriot." But "anyone who disagreed with him was, in his eyes, neither honourable nor clever nor a patriot." He was, in short, the typical hero of the sensational novelette. Hearing of the proposed Austrian review at Serajevo, he instantly scented danger. He consulted Russian friends, and was informed, on the authority of the Russian General Staff, that Serajevo was to be used as a jumping-off place for an attack on Serbia. He was immediately convinced of the truth of this extraordinary statement, and decided that the only way to save his country was to murder the Archduke. Just then he learned that a group of Bosnian students had come to the same conclusion. He interviewed them, approved, and directed that they should be instructed in the use of bombs. When, however, he laid his scheme before his organization, objections were raised, and he agreed to withdraw. It appears that he did make some attempt to stop the project, but "it was either too late or the murderers in Serajevo refused to obey."

As to these murderers, they were of the type with which readers of Dostoevsky have become familiar. One, Princip, was "far advanced with tuberculosis. He could not have

lived long in any case." "Owing to misconduct at school," he had fled to Belgrade, and there gathered round him a group of young Bosnians. "He seized more easily the idea of assassinating the Archduke, because, on account of weak health, he had been contemptuously refused admission to a komitadji band, and wanted to show what he could do." He used to visit the grave of a youth who had attempted the life of the Governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina. "I often spent the night there. Then I decided on the murder, and swore on his grave to commit a murder some time or other." Chabrinovich was another of the same type. He, too, went to the grave. "It was neglected, and I arranged to make it look a little prettier. There I made a resolve to die as he did. I knew that I should not live long. Thoughts of suicide always occupied me, so it was all the same to me." The third, Gravezh, "went home to Bosnia meaning to prepare to pass the eighth class, and while there learned of the proposed visit of the Archduke, and at once resolved to kill him." Asked why, he replied: "Such a man ought not to live. He was the opponent of the great idea of the South Slavs." Asked whether he did not realize that murder was a sin, he replied: "None of the young people have the religion you mean. But there is national religion, and that in a high degree."

So much for the murderers. But the vexed question remains: Did the Serbian Government know of the plot? We have the testimony of Ljuba Jovanovich, then Minister of Education, that they did. One day, he tells us, at the beginning of June or the end of May, M. Paschitch (then, as now, Prime Minister) said to the members of his Cabinet that "there were persons who were preparing to go to Serajevo to kill Francis Ferdinand." It was agreed thereupon that instructions should be sent to the frontier to prevent the youths from crossing into Bosnia. "But the frontier authorities themselves belonged to the organization and did not carry out the instructions, but reported that the order had reached too late, for the young men had already got across." What did the Serbian Government then do? We come here to a region of assertion and counter-assertion. It has been stated that Paschitch sent a telegram to the Serbian Minister at Vienna, directing him to warn the Archduke. But the Minister, Jovan Jovanovich, who has given his own account, says nothing about such a telegram. The Vice-Director of the Austrian archives says that the telegram is not to be found, nor does he recognize the number by which it is designated as belonging to any system in use at the Foreign Office. The archives of the Ministry, however, were looted by the Jugo-Slavs, so that he cannot verify further. Meantime, Jovanovich states that he did, on his own initiative, warn, not Count Berchtold, but Bilinski, Minister of Education, and formally responsible for Bosnia. In fact, the control of the province was under the resident Governor. No result was produced. How should it have been? For Jovanovich said nothing about the definite plot of which his Government was aware; and why should the Archduke shrink from fulfilling an engagement on a mere vague threat of possible danger?

Would it be possible, even now, to establish the facts? Here comes in another curious episode. In 1917 certain persons were accused of a plot to murder the Crown Prince of Serbia. Among these were Dimitrievich himself, and two others, who are said to have been cognisant of the murder. These were executed on what appears to have been the flimsiest evidence, and a manifesto of the Serbian opposition declares explicitly that Dimitrievich was killed, among other reasons, because "he organized the Serajevo murder." There remains still one man who was implicated. That is Ciganovich, who was specially incriminated by Austria in 1914. He was an employé on the Serbian railways. The Serbian Government said they could not find him, and later shipped him across to America. On his return he was given a plot of land, on which he is now living, near Uskub. He might, presumably, be produced. But in the February of 1925 Mr. Seton-Watson challenged the Serbian Government, in the *Times*, to make clear whether or no they were cognisant of the murder, and up to the end of the year no reply has been made.

All this is of interest to those who still remember the events of 1914. But it would be easy to exaggerate the importance of its bearing on the outbreak of the war. It was, indeed, the immediate occasion; but some occasion

there was bound to be. The war, one must say, was fatally predetermined by the policies of all the Great Powers, and nothing short of a miracle could have prevented it. That, however, belongs to another and a larger argument. Meantime, the evidence already collected throws an interesting light on one, at least, of the new States created by the war. The Serbians, naturally, congratulate themselves that, out of the tortured, reeling world, Jugo-Slavia has duly emerged. "Yes," said one of them to Miss Durham, "it was a pity that so many people were killed—but in fact it has quite succeeded, and Great Serbia has been made." A pity! Well, let us leave it at that.

G. LOWES DICKINSON.

HORSE-HOOFS

William Cobbett. By G. K. CHESTERTON. (Hodder & Stoughton, 6s.)

IN one of those passages which give to his work a lyrical beauty if not a rational justification, Mr. Chesterton, who as a boy lived in the main Kensington thoroughfare along which Cobbett often passed on horseback, tells how, in a sort of symbolical day-dream, he has frequently pictured that burly farmer's son riding backward through time as he rides westward through space—until at last, approaching "the stormy wall of Wales," he reaches the spot where "a low red light glows for ever upon things forgotten and the last ruins of the Round Table." The Wen, which Cobbett so fervently hated, has spread further and further along that sunset road, swallowing not only Kensington, but Chiswick and Richmond; and often it seems as if nothing could stem the modern tide. Then, however, there comes to Mr. Chesterton "the notion that high tides can turn"; and sometimes, in "that unvisited hour of almost utter stillness" that precludes the rumbling of the market carts into town, he has had the impression that the vast modern emporiums, "seen in outline like uncouth drawings," stand less securely than they did against the sky, and in fancy he has "heard, tiny and very far away, something like a faint voice hallooing and the sound of horse-hoofs that return."

Here, in a paragraph, we have Mr. Chesterton's "Cobbett." He calls his book a "biography"; but readers who want that had better stick to Mr. Cole. As a serious criticism of Cobbett and his times, Mr. Chesterton's volume has small value. He is a little too ingenious in explaining things away. Were there glaring inconsistencies in Cobbett? Yes; but they were only on the surface. The real confusion was "not in Cobbett, but in the terms Tory and Radical. They are not exact terms; they are nothing like so exact as Cobbett was. . . . It was the Tories who were not clear about Toryism. It was the Radicals who were inconsistent about Radicalism." The whole historical background of Cobbett is, indeed, deftly arranged so as to exhibit Cobbett himself as the prophet of that return to mediævalism which Mr. Chesterton desires. Until the recent revival of interest in him, Cobbett was regarded as "out of date." That, however, was only because he was even further in advance of his time than most prophets:—

"It is the paradox of his life that he loved the past, and that he alone really lived in the future. That is, he alone lived in the real future. . . . It is the riddle of the man that if he was wrong then, he is right now. As a dead man fighting with dead men, he can still very easily be covered with derision; but if we imagine him still alive and talking to living men, his remarks are rather uncomfortably like life. . . . We, at least, have done all that Cobbett's enemies were accused of doing. . . . Cobbett's enemies may or may not have ruined agriculture; but anyhow we have. Cobbett's enemies may or may not have decreased the national wealth; but it is decreased. . . . In a mere quarrel between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, he may easily appear wrong; but in a quarrel between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century he is right."

In a word, we have reached the point (instinctively foreseen by Cobbett) at which our only salvation lies in a deliberate revolution from "the individualistic industrialism that has produced the proletarian peril"; and Mr. Chesterton, whose poetical flights will be read with joy, if not with credulity, by all lovers of the English countryside, ventures upon the implied prophecy that by the thirtieth century Cobbett's horse-hoofs will indeed have returned.

ICE AND AIRPLANES

My Polar Flight. By ROALD AMUNDSEN. (Hutchinson, 21s.)

By Airplane towards the North Pole. By WALTER MITTELHOLZER and Others. (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.)

With Seaplane and Sledge in the Arctic. By GEORGE BINNEY. (Hutchinson, 21s.)

Four Years in the White North. By DONALD B. MACMILLAN. (Medici Society, 17s. 6d.)

POLAR exploration is at a parting of the ways. It is not to be expected that the century which has been christened "The Heroic Age of Physical Science" should pass without bringing about radical alterations in this as in every other department of civilized life and enterprise.

It is therefore natural to find that three of the four books reviewed in the present article deal with the newest phase in Polar transport—the application of the airplane in its various forms to Polar travel. "My Polar Flight," by the greatest of the Polar explorers of the present generation, is a thrilling account of an enterprise which, though modified from its original rather grandiose form, still remains on record as an attempt to achieve the apparently impossible, the successful outcome of which was more lucky than likely. There are dozens of reasons why these pioneers of Arctic air exploration should have perished during the journey; few, except the kindness of Fortune and the grit and resourcefulness of exceptional men, to account for their safe return. The relative impossibility of ensuring a safe landing upon the Arctic Pack with any present type of aeroplane, seaplane, or flying boat, has been demonstrated even to Amundsen's satisfaction, and, if he and his men believe it to be too dangerous an experiment to repeat, they should be the final arbiters on the subject until new types of machine have been evolved.

The uneven nature of the surface of the Pack; the rarity and narrowness of the open water spaces; the constant movement of the ice, which behaves much like the kaleidoscope, that toy of a former generation of children; the difficulties placed in the adventurer's way alike by rise and fall of temperature—all combine to make air travelling over the Arctic Ocean foolhardy pending the evolution of a machine which can land upon and take off from snow, ice, or water, without the thousand-yard long clear track of sea or level ice which is at present necessary. It is possible that the solution of this difficulty lies with the development of the auto-gyro airplane or the helicopter, now struggling through the preliminary experimental stages of their career. At present we must admit that, just as in modern war the infantryman remains essential to the complete subjugation and holding of an enemy country, so the late expeditions have riveted more firmly in our minds the impression that, while the airplane has manifold uses and will be a valuable auxiliary, the ship and the ground-sledge party will for some time remain the backbone, legs, and arms of the expedition endeavouring to carry out sound geographical work.

"By Airplane towards the North Pole," by Walter Mittelholzer and others, is the record of a small party originally intended for what would have been a hare-brained attempt to land a depot on the moving ice of the Arctic Pack to the north of Spitzbergen, had Amundsen's original plans been carried out. The survey work achieved by the aircraft of the expedition is, however, a useful contribution to Arctic science.

The account of these flying trips over Arctic lands and seas is easily the best portion of the book, written as it is with an enthusiasm which might have been extended with advantage at the expense of the more pedestrian description of the environment of Spitzbergen which precedes it. The third book of the trilogy also includes a description of air reconnaissance in the Arctic. "With Seaplane and Sledge in the Arctic," by George Binney, is a well-written and well-illustrated account of the last Oxford Spitzbergen Expedition. The book is an adequate description of a peculiarly well-organized summer venture, which combined the use of new and untried means of exploration with the very successful application of the recognized methods of transport to fresh, if necessarily limited, areas of land and sea.

No Polar library can pretend to be complete in essentials unless it contains all three books. All three will be valuable adjuncts to a library dealing with aviation and its application to the problems and activities of civilization.

Of the three, Mr. Binney's book will probably appeal to the widest public, especially to those people who are fortunate enough to possess the gift of literary appreciation.

The last of the four books, "Four Years in the White North," by Donald B. MacMillan, is a narrative of an expedition of the old style. MacMillan has followed faithfully in the footsteps of his old leader—Robert Peary—whose greatest contribution to Polar work was undoubtedly the systematic exploitation of the Smith Sound Eskimo as his allies in Arctic exploration and especially in his quest for the Pole. As a record of adventure and a pleasant description of North-West Greenland and its environment, the book is a welcome addition to the literature of exploration. It adds little to our knowledge of Polar lands, but it presents some of that knowledge and much of the life of their inhabitants in a very readable form.

A. C. B.

Arthur Christopher Benson. (Bell. 8s. 6d.)

"I WISH I knew who had written my obituary notice for the *Times*," Arthur Benson used to say: "I could have done it so much better myself." This particular art (and he excelled in it) was very sweet to him. He could not bear the idea of an amateur's clumsy efforts—and he the subject. They would be sure to make him out an old duffer or a saintly man with silver hair.

The contributors to this Symposium have tried, each in his own way, to show that "A. C. B." did not write "The Thread of Gold": or, to put it more clearly, that the Benson they knew was an exceptionally human and humorous man, a great conversationalist (and a good housemaster, which is so important); one whose personality was unknown to his public and the world at large. There is much in the book which is untrue, much (and some of it true) which would have made Benson very angry. On the whole it is not misleading, but one would have liked more of his absurd anecdotes and *baroque* phrases recorded; perhaps they died with the man. A few assertions must be contradicted. Benson had *not* got "a very remarkable intellect"; he was *not* (because he twice had melancholia) morbidly introspective; he never spun threads of his stories "from his very vitals"; he continually questioned "the supremacy of Greek literature"; he disliked Eton; he would never "have admitted that his diet was not supremely wise" (at the end of dinner he would confess a desire to start all over again: but he was very proud that he never ate cake at tea); his interest in general human experience was *not* "confined to the pictorial, the scenic, and the superficial." He was a most curious and attentive listener to all stories of horror and passion.

Culture was Arthur Benson's creed; not the Public School Spirit, with its conceit and cruelty; not Good Form, but Good Manners. Those grim and lengthy silences with which every Cambridge man is so familiar, and of which, rightly, he is so proud, vexed Benson extremely. Certainly every black cloud vanished when he was in the room. "Dost thou think that because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" Unfortunately, the ginger that was so hot in his mouth was omitted among the ingredients of his books; books of which no one, as Mr. Percy Lubbock says, could make such sublime mockery as himself, afterwards attributing it to "his icily fastidious friend."

Benson was selfish and tyrannical in small things, kindly but not really generous: he would give one a paper-knife on a birthday, and a five-pound note (an old, unexpectedly returned loan), for no reason, on some other occasion. Yet he was the most delightful and affectionate friend, and the best company that could be imagined.

Mr. Madan, Mr. Gaselee, and one or two others have given us the real Benson in these pages. They are a pleasure to read and a pain. For we shall never again see A. C. B. shake his loose frame as he limps through the fields about Cambridge and Rye, muttering with upturned eye, "Deplorable! Grotesque!" never again open the door on to the green gloom of the study, to be greeted so warmly, as by some god of the sea, recumbent in the surf of writing-paper and letters and manuscript, as he poured forth another three thousand words before dinner.

SPIRITUAL VALUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Spiritual Values in Adult Education: a Study of a Neglected Aspect. By BASIL A. YEAXLEE. (Oxford University Press. Vol. I, 10s. 6d.; Vol. II, 15s.)

THE two volumes before us comprise the most detailed study of Adult Education which has yet been made. They are, moreover, the expression of the faith of an ardent worker in the field, who has sought sympathetic contact with the varied movements of his time and who desires eagerly to assist their development. In no sense does the author set out to achieve a work of scholarship or research, but rather to create a practical manual inspired by a high ideal. If Mr. Dobbs can find opportunity to compile the anxiously awaited continuation of his "Education and Social Movements" (Longmans)—the only existing piece of pure research into Adult Education in England—Dr. Yeaxlee's book will afford him much information presented in a clear and accurate manner.

At a time when there is so much examination and expression of the method, content, and technique of education, it is fitting that a writer concerned with these aspects should attempt to prove that education is an affair of the spirit, and to demonstrate that educational efforts have survived only in so far as they have corresponded with this fundamental force in human life. In the realm of Adult Education this can be easily done, for every pioneer, whether it be Grundvig of Denmark, Vincent of America, or Paton of England, acknowledged in daily, if not hourly, life the power of the spirit. Even the twentieth-century movement of the Workers' Educational Association can be traced in its sources to spiritual apprehension. Of course, the spiritual force must find expression in intellectual and even physical terms, or else it achieves no success, and even comes to be "nothing regarded." In order to support his thesis, Dr. Yeaxlee draws liberally from the vast storehouse of great English teachers, but, if he fails at all, it is to make his own conviction burn its way into the consciousness of his readers. He has made a great pile of evidence, but he has not applied the light which is ever discerned by him and by those who do not place all their trust in material and mental things. Neither has he applied, other than generically, a critical method. It would seem that all adult educational movements are to be commended, and even placated, as fit for inclusion in the larger unity. The uniformity of his appreciation, indeed, tends to become monotonous. In praising the sayings of even living men he has brought under toll all the possible adjectives of a rich vocabulary.

Perhaps it is difficult to decide where propaganda begins and education ends, but clearly the planes of their operation are on different levels, perceived as higher or lower according to the passion of the people concerned. A further difficulty is engendered by the common practice of interweaving the two methods, sometimes as a matter of deliberate procedure, sometimes as the result of a lack of clear thinking. Yet the diverse opinions of our time, resultant upon a whole tradition of varied experience, have made it inevitable, in the region of adult education at least, that no subject can be completely studied unless men and women diametrically opposed in dogmatic conviction do meet together and attempt to build up and to perceive the whole truth. What, for example, would be the use in our time of an Adult Educational system which, turning to economics, failed to provide opportunity for the trade unionist, the employer, the banker, the priest to lay their facts and their minds together, as they attempted a synthetic understanding of one or other of the multifarious aspects of the subject?

Such provision is obviously different from that made for those who accept as exclusive a dogmatic or temperamental basis. Even so, that man who sees any one basis as complete, whether it be Marxian or Christian, Liberal or Conservative—and many do confine themselves to one—should not so much be condemned as resisted and fought, if he seeks to order the general system of education on the lines of his own peculiar perception.

Dr. Yeaxlee is sympathetic with both methods. He sees the Christian Churches, amid a wild profusion of effort, not completely fulfilling, or even attempting to fulfil, the task which is plainly theirs. He is fearful of antagonism between the sectional interests, and, as we have seen, longs for a unity, but such a unity will only come as the result of a

recognition that education is, after all, a fundamental force, which in the power of the spirit does enable men, no matter what their opinions, to make the best of themselves. It is, in fact, the force which makes it possible for men to have opinions the propagation of which is on a different plane.

In spite of his uncritical vagueness, which, after all, arises out of a large spirit of charity, these two volumes are suggestive and indispensable to students and inquirers generally.

Perhaps Dr. Yeaxlee will some day give us a small volume which people in general may be disposed to read, and which will reveal the flame of his own spirit, which must have ever been burning to enable him to conceive, construct, and bring to a successful issue so valuable "a study of" so "neglected" an "aspect."

ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

MISS SITWELL AGAIN

Poetry and Criticism. By EDITH SITWELL (Hogarth Press. 2s. 6d.)

THE argument which runs somewhat discursively through this essay will be familiar to those who remember the so-called "debate" at the London School of Economics between Miss Sitwell and Mr. Alfred Noyes. Miss Sitwell's contention is that "there is not the slightest difference between the criticisms of the past and the criticisms of to-day, except that the latter are more vulgar and often more personally abusive." In every age, the Mr. Squires and Mr. Lynds (the particular objects of Miss Sitwell's scorn) have praised the "safe, tame poetry." While, for instance, "they were ardently agreeing to differ or agreeing to agree about Moore, Campbell, Kirke White, Bloomfield, Hogg, Southey, and others, many of the works that were destined later to represent the genius of the time unconsciously eluded them or were consciously dismissed." Many similar examples are given us. We are reminded that the MONTHLY REVIEW described "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as a "rhapsody of unintelligible wildness and incoherence"; that the QUARTERLY complained that Keats had "no meaning"; that Jeffrey characterized "The Excursion" as "a tissue of moral and devotional ravings"; and that BLACKWOOD said of Shelley that "were we not assured to the contrary, we should take it for granted that the author is lunatic, as his principles are ludicrously wicked, and his poetry a *mélange* of nonsense, cockneyism, poverty, and pedantry."

In the light of these jewelled phrases from BLACKWOOD, we can hardly agree with Miss Sitwell that criticism is "often more personally abusive" than it used to be. We recall no occasion on which Mr. Squire has darkly hinted in public that Miss Sitwell is "lunatic"; nor are we aware that Mr. Lynd (however strongly he may have been tempted) has ever called her principles "ludicrously wicked." Apart from this point, however, we admit that Miss Sitwell establishes the negative side of her case. She does impress upon us afresh the danger of accepting contemporary valuations of poetry. But the rest of her essay is not such plain sailing. Parts of it are not completely intelligible to us; but its twofold idea seems to be that since, from Shakespeare's day onwards, there appears to have been the necessity every century for a new poetical technique, the time is now due for one, and that it is the Sitwellian order of poetry which, though derided at the moment, will be recognized by posterity as having provided that new technique for our own age. In order that we may anticipate posterity in its enjoyment of this "modernist poetry," a characteristic poem, "which many people pretended was incapable of explanation," is furnished for our enlightenment with an elaborate key. We allow that, thus analyzed, the "Aubade" becomes "extremely simple." But whether, with its "new scale of sense values," it really adds anything to beauty or truth is another matter. Awed by the terrible array of past critical errors which frowns upon him from Miss Sitwell's pages, a mere reviewer may well hesitate to pronounce judgment. After all, only Time can show whether Miss Sitwell or her detractors are in the right. The pity of it is that when Time does issue its final verdict, neither she nor they may be here to receive it.

GILBERT THOMAS.

LITERARY SATIRE

Elnovia. By GEOFFREY FABER. (Faber & Gwyer. 7s. 6d.)

Few persons who really know how to read can fail to enjoy literary satire, and the appearance of a work in that kind is a healthy symptom. The appetite for parody is not one and the same with the appetite for satire. The latter is vigorous in any period in which men take literature so seriously that they can jest about it in a positively religious temper and build their jests into some effective monument. Parody, ephemeral and loosely floating, aims at the enjoyment of the moment, crams all its eggs into one basket, and demands instant recognition if it is to live at all. The absurdities of "Evøe" and Mr. Leacock are open and manifest, whereas such a book as Mr. Faber's requires something intellectual and craftsmanlike in its readers rather than a mere sensuous enjoyment of the ridiculous.

"Elnovia" is the name given to a strange floating continent, adjoining the realms of Madratia and Trypøe, in which three modern travellers are forced to land from their aeroplane. The staid Henry Coleopter, F.R.S., is the narrator of the events which befell him and his companions, the courageous Captain Flutter and the sturdy mechanic Stood.

In Elnovia there are found prevailing those social formulæ and shibboleths which fettered the novel twenty to thirty years ago. In Elnovia the Triangle is the symbol of Life. Accidents occur incessantly in order to avert monotony. The orthodox teachers of the country believe that Reality has Extension, but no Depth. Each person, each event, is weighty with the sense of significance, and the unforgivable sin is to be "out of Character."

The strangers have ultimately to escape to the revolutionary kingdom of New Elnovia, whence they are believed to have come on account of their speech and opinions. In New Elnovia depression and fluent talk hang in the air like a poisonous fog. Discords are indefinitely prolonged, lest anything so abhorrent as a happy ending should materialize, and the population spend the day in voluble self-analysis. After various adventures of the correct type, and a journey across the restless land of Mifia, the travellers and their Elnovian brides return to earth.

Mr. Faber has worked with very welcome restraint, so that many of his small humorous touches might be overlooked by the impatient. For the simple reason that it is not too extravagant, the encounter with the eminent detective is one of the funniest episodes in the book. Obvious satire has been avoided, this lending the main story a quiet verisimilitude which is very welcome. The illustrations by Mr. George Morrow vividly represent the bewildered travellers.

PRINNY

The Lives of the Rakes.—Vol. VI., The Regency Rakes. By E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR, M.A., F.S.A. (Philip Allan. 10s. 6d.)

As surely as illustration continues to be the bane of post-Victorian English art, morality remains the bane of post-Victorian English biography. There can be no possible objection to serious discussion of the moral aspects of any historical character, but if a historical person is worth a serious biographer's attention at all, he must have had some characteristics that have phenomenal as well as moral aspects and demand adequate treatment as phenomena—as matters likely to interest the humanist as distinct from the mere social or sectarian moralist. Biography is the art of the humanist, and humanism is something of which ethics is merely a department, so that the writer who over-emphasizes the moral aspects of a character—it does not matter whether he be a censor or an apologist—is a bad biographer. During the last few years we have seen a study of that wonderful human phenomenon Pietro Aretino practically spoiled by the author's too great consciousness of conventional propriety.

Mr. E. Beresford Chancellor's study of George IV., being one of a series of "Lives of the Rakes," cannot be expected to elaborate that side of George's character which made him delight in the conversation of intelligent men, or that other side which enabled him to appreciate the merits of the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century and made him send £200 to Beethoven when Beethoven

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needed it. But Mr. Chancellor has not recreated, has not even reasoned out any theory of George's character on its vicious side. For instance, he mentions that George had a weakness for married ladies. It is a fact that might be psycho-analyzed, but better still it might have been treated with the detached scrutiny of the artist. It may have been either from some unexpected sense of chivalry or from fear that George preferred as a rule to leave the unsophisticated alone. Mr. Chancellor merely mentions the fact and leaves it at that, and by itself the mere mention of fact is not of special interest.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Chancellor has missed a chance of achieving distinction as a philosophic biographer—more especially as he seems to have been aware that the chance was there, since he compares George to some Roman Emperor of the decadence. Mr. Chancellor is not Racine nor a dramatic poet, but one has only to think of the psychology of "Britannicus" to realize what he might have done with the character of George on those lines. He has preferred to recount the list of George's successive love affairs without producing a single creative idea of the man himself. He writes with the detachment of the newspaper reporter rather than that of the artist. And all through there is an implication, and now and again an assertion, of an attitude of moral judiciousness so conventional as to be stale to the least educated of his readers, and therefore uncalled for. One can only assume that the book, unlike others of Mr. Chancellor's, was written hastily, without serious thought.

ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

Two interesting biographies are: "Mary Macarthur, A Biographical Sketch," by Mary Agnes Hamilton (Parsons, 3s. 6d.), and "Lord Grenfell's Memoirs" (Hodder & Stoughton, 21s.). "Mathilda Wrede of Finland," by Lilian Stevenson (Allen & Unwin, 5s.), gives the life story of a prison reformer. "Famous Gentlemen Riders at Home and Abroad," by Charles A. Voigt (Hutchinson, 24s.), contains much interesting information about amateur riders and the Grand National and other Steeplechases.

Among travel books the following should be noted: "Southward Ho!" by Ralph Deakin, with a Preface by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (Methuen, 10s. 6d.), which deals with the Prince's voyage to Africa and South America; "Papua of To-day," by Sir Hubert Murray (King, 21s.); "The Argentina of To-day," by L. E. Elliott (Hurst & Blackett, 18s.); "Beyond the Moon Gate," by Welthy Honsinger (Gay & Hancock, 6s.), which contains the diary of ten years in China.

"The Bookman Treasury of Living Poets," edited by St. John Adcock (Hodder & Stoughton, 7s. 6d.), is a fairly catholic anthology of modern poets.

"Rugby Football," by R. Cove Smith, with a foreword by W. W. Wakefield (Methuen, 5s.), is a handbook of the game; the names of the two famous forwards on the title-page are a sufficient guarantee that it contains the last and most expert word on modern Rugby.

"A Comprehensive Treatise on Inorganic and Theoretical Chemistry, Vol. VI," by J. W. Mellor (Longmans, 63s.), contains the end of Chapter XXXIX, dealing with Carbon, and Chapter XL, dealing with Silicon.

Two books on architecture to be noted are: "Some Lesser-Known Architecture of London," by James Burford and J. D. M. Harvey (Benn, 15s.), and "Dutch Architecture of the XXth Century," by J. P. Mieras and F. R. Yerbury (Benn, 32s. 6d.).

"The Letters of Jane Austen," selected with an introduction by R. Brimley Johnson (Bodley Head, 6s.), contains the first selection of the novelist's letters.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

▲ **Theory of Direct Realism, and the Relation of Realism to Idealism.** By J. E. TURNER, M.A., Ph.D. (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.)

In this substantial volume the author develops a theory of realism which maintains "the existential identity between sensed contents and physical entities." This identity, inherent in the naive realism of common-sense (which Dr. Turner considers to be much more rational and less "instinctive" than most philosophers suppose), need not be

abandoned on a more critical consideration, although it must be qualified as "partial identity" or "identity in difference." And "in no instance where physical reality is actually perceived . . . is there any absolute variance between the characters of the sensed content and those of the physical entity itself." Dr. Turner dismisses too summarily the very strong reasons (such as the time-interval involved in perception) that we have for thinking this proposition to be false. The exposition of "direct realism" is followed by a criticism of other modern realists (Dr. Moore, who has suggested a theory somewhat similar to Dr. Turner's, being strangely omitted), and a discussion of the realism in the Idealist philosophy of Hegel and the British Hegelians, a misunderstanding of which Dr. Turner shows to be very general. The book concludes with an explanation of the temporal and physical "ideality" of the physical world.

* * *

From Hall-Boy to House-Steward. By W. LANCELEY. (Arnold, 10s. 6d.)

By ability and economy Mr. Lanceley, who began as a hall-boy on eight pounds a year, rose to be house-steward to the Duke of Connaught. But the good servant is the last person from whom to expect a racy description of a servant's life. He becomes the echo of his master; he becomes even more aristocratic than the aristocrat. "There is a quotation among old servants," he says, which runs:—

"You may break, you may shatter the vase as you will,
But the scent of the roses will cling to it still"—

and Mr. Lanceley's book entirely bears out this praise of the rose. They feed you well, they house you well; in addition, they "never pass a remark on a servant in the hearing of another," and so on. Indeed, when Mr. Lanceley went into service in the 'seventies, servants never asked for holidays, for the food and comfort they enjoyed at the great house were infinitely superior to what they got at home. They worshipped their master's goods. He has a story of a housemaid whose boast it was that she had washed the same dinner service for twenty-five years without so much as chipping a single piece. They stayed long in their places. They observed decorous rites as to chairs and benches. But Mr. Lanceley was too much of a gentleman to eavesdrop, and so, though he handed a great many dishes to well-known people, he seldom heard a complete story fall from their lips, and, naturally, had no time to listen to Oscar Wilde, though he often helped him off with his coat. His vivacity steadily diminishes as he climbs higher. When he began life the squire swore and drank and dropped the candle-grease about. Nowadays, gentlemen are as exemplary as their butlers. But, on the whole, Mr. Lanceley makes out a good case for the life of a servant, nor has successful serving by any means blinded him to the problems of the future. He himself keeps servants now, and, to his great credit, for the promoted servant is apt to be a tyrant, they stay with him for years.

* * *

Co-operative Storekeeping. By SYDNEY R. ELLIOTT. With an Introduction by MARGARET LLEWELYN DAVIES, (Labour Publishing Co. 1s.)

This little book should be extremely useful. Its subtitle is "Eighty Years of Constructive Revolution," and its object is, as Miss Davies says, to provide "a fresh record and restatement of the achievements of British Co-operation, its difficulties, and its lines of development." Within the limits set him, Mr. Elliott has done his work well. His statement of facts is clear and accurate; his discussion of present problems and future possibilities is interesting. The last chapter, in which he considers, among other things, the ways in which a Labour Government might use the co-operative system and movement, is particularly worthy of notice.

* * *

The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion in the Year 1764-1765. (Thornton Butterworth, 7s. 6d.)

This purports to be the diary of Miss Cleone Knox, written during the year 1764-1765. The language is often startlingly modern. The diary itself reads more like a novel than anything else—but then, as everyone knows, truth is stranger and rarer than fiction.

* * *

Minims. By KAPP. (Faber & Gwyer, 2s. 6d.)

Mr. Edmond Kapp explains what his "minims" are thus: "The enclosed scribbles are simply attempts to catch moods, emotions, sensations, with one or two strokes of the pen." He calls them minims because that word means both "a downstroke of the pen" and "creature of the smallest size and importance." Some of them are amusing, particularly "Toothache," "God," "Volupté," and "Sudden Death Imminent." Some of them, e.g., "Social Success," seem to be rather too elaborate to come within the definition.

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Mr. E. M. FORSTER, author of "A Passage to India," etc., will contribute an article on "Hannah More," which will prove one of the most charming and amusing of his recent essays.

January 9th—

Mr. J. M. KEYNES, author of "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," etc., will contribute an article on "The Franc," which will analyse the financial situation in France and will suggest the lines along which a solution might be found.

This is the first of a series of monthly articles by Mr. Keynes.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

MARKETS—THE OIL OUTLOOK—LAGO AND BRITISH CONTROLLED OILFIELDS.

STOCK EXCHANGE markets have been quiet, but not unduly so for the eve of holidays. In fact it has taken only a favourable breeze to fan some of the smouldering embers to a blaze. A mere mention of economies effected on coal purchases caused home railway stocks to recover sharply. The rubber share market is enjoying a healthy reaction, but it seems difficult at present to bring the price of rubber much below 3s. 9d. The share market shows a tendency to recover strength quickly on any upward move in the price of the commodity. The gilt-edged market, after the 5 per cent. Bank rate appeared fixed till 1926 and the Midland Bank had helped the discount market, emerged from its gloom and prices became more normal. The absence in New York of the Governor of the Bank of England makes for a sense of confidence, if not cheerfulness, in the market.

* * *

The oil share market has been distinguished by individual rises rather than by any general upward movement. We have previously expressed the view that the present decline in crude oil production in America has not yet gone far enough to encourage the prospect of any firm rise in oil prices. There is a reasonable possibility that oil prices have now touched bottom, but "the turn" in the oil situation so far only consists of two advances in the price of Pennsylvania crude oil, which is no index of the general oil situation, and small advances in the prices of petrol on seasonal export purchases, and of fuel oil and kerosene on the seasonal domestic demand stimulated by the anthracite coal strike. As regards individual features, the rise in Shells has been helped along by purchases from Paris. As everyone knows, whenever the franc falls, the price of Shells on the London Stock Exchange tends to rise. At one time Shell Bearer shares commanded a premium of about 3s. 1½d. The premium has now dropped to 1s. 10½d. on the improvement of the franc and the reopening of the books of the company, which facilitates the transfer of registered shares. Another feature has been the meteoric rise of about £1 in the price of Lago shares. In *THE NATION* of January 31st we gave some idea of the attractive prospects of this company. An adverse feature has hitherto been the intense competition between Lago and V.O.C. Ltd. in the La Rosa field. Since the agreement was reached regarding the spacing of wells, the competition has been less frantic, and recently Lago was able to bring in a new well called Ambrosia in a section of the Maracaibo lake some few miles distant from the existing La Rosa wells. The market in Lago shares is almost entirely dependent upon New York interest. Since the Standard Oil Company of Indiana acquired control of the Company, there has been persistent buying by Standard Oil friends, led by Messrs. Blair & Company, the New York bankers. Recently a party of prominent Standard Oil men and New York bankers set sail in Mr. Doheny's yacht (which somehow got included in the purchase by Standard Oil of Mr. Doheny's Mexican company) for the oilfields of Venezuela, and this great occasion was the signal for an outburst of New York buying. For English holders of Lago shares it would be wise to take advantage of this sudden rise, for one never knows when New York buying will cease. The market in Lago shares is more speculative on this account than that of the rubber commodity market, and no one but the very rich should be tempted to buy Lago

shares at 45s. We only recommended purchase when they were near 20s.

* * *

The report of British Controlled Oilfields, Ltd., issued this week, is a remarkable document. For the year to June, 1925, a profit of some £252,000 has been earned after providing for depreciation, against a profit in the previous year of £18,000, arrived at before providing for depreciation and after taking credit for a profit on the sale of investments of £117,973. For the calendar year 1925 gross revenue is up to £1,000,000, and a dividend on the 7 per cent. Convertible preferred stock of \$22,499,850 becomes a possibility. Shipments this year up to November have amounted to 317,065 tons, against 142,344 tons in the whole of 1924, while production has been doubled. "The stage," according to the retiring directors, "is thus set for a prosperous future." But there remains a suspense account of \$22,721,920, which represents lost or non-existent assets, and is greater than the amount of common stock outstanding (\$22,500,150). The retiring board intended to propose writing-off this suspense account by the cheap and simple device of writing-down the ordinary stock to shares of no par value. The decision is left to the new board of directors, which takes office under the chairmanship of so eminent a lawyer as Lord Buckmaster. What is the man-in-the-street to make of this extraordinary document? It is plain that the stage is hardly set for a prosperous future until the old scenery has been taken down. And the old scenery remains in the uncomfortably large shape of a suspense account of £4½ millions. A new board of directors is not necessarily a guarantee for a prosperous future. The Company, indeed, can have no future until it has lived down its past. And the past is represented by the Voting Trustees, who were appointed for life when the Company was formed. The Voting Trustees have power to nominate the Board for election, and, with general meetings in Canada, nomination is as good as appointment. The Voting Trustees, in effect, retired the present board and nominated a new one under Lord Buckmaster. It must be obvious that the retiring board has fallen out with some of the Voting Trustees, and the writing down of capital is one of the occasions of dispute. The retiring board asserts in its report that "included under 'cost of concessions' there has been carried forward as assets from year to year the cost of certain concessions, options, and other interests which had been purchased by this Company before the present board took office. A number of these assets, in scattered territories—in Central and South America, but in no case in Venezuela—have proved to be of no value. One, the present board were able to sell for a small sum." Here may be the *casus belli* between some of the Voting Trustees and the retiring Board of Directors, who have been cleaning up the muddle with brutal expedition. As regards the future of the Company, the present drilling campaign is coming to an end, and the new board will have to take momentous and technical decisions. A decision to write down the capital stock is the first and easiest step: the next is to settle the Company's development in the oil fields, and it will be no easy matter to maintain the production of the British Controlled Oilfields next year at the high rate of increase shown in 1925. The shares, common and preferred, fell on the issue of the report to 17s. and 17s. 6d. respectively.

